

✧ evergreen [4]



story
YUYUKO TAKEMIYA

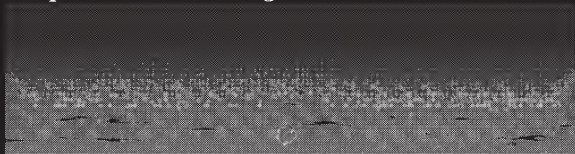
art
AKIRA GASKABE



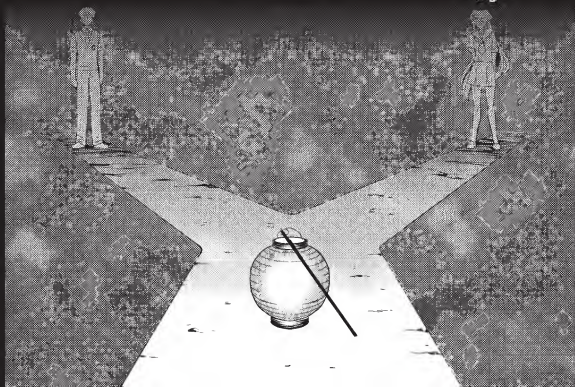
evergreen



Chapter 15: Frozen Night



Flicker
IT
TH



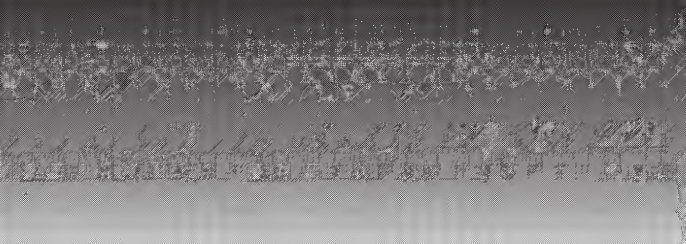


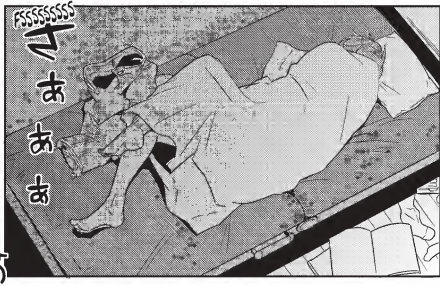
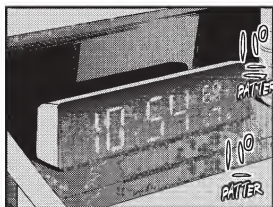
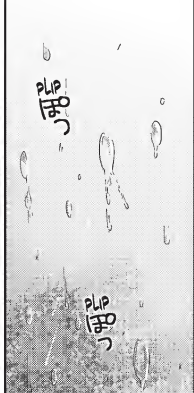
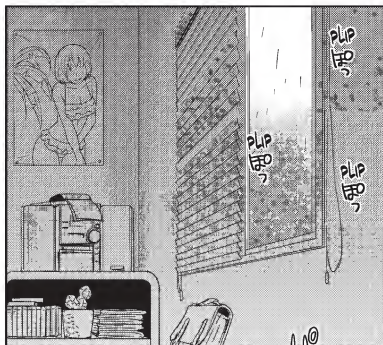
*FROM
THE
VERY
BEGIN-
NING...*



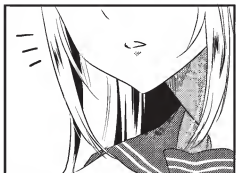
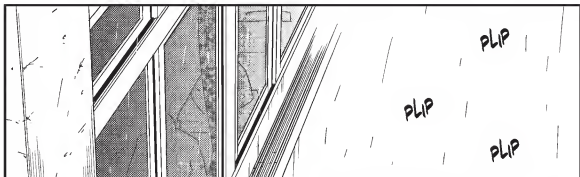
*EVERYTHING
WAS
WRONG.*

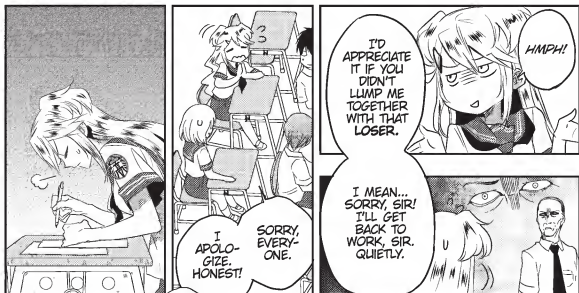
Chapter 15: Frozen Night













TODAY
IS A
SPECIAL
DAY.

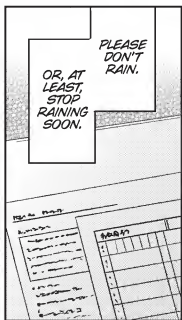


EVEN IF
IT'S A
DELLIGE
THAT'LL
DROWN ME,
I WON'T
LITTER A
SINGLE
WORD OF
COMPLAINT.
I PROMISE.

NO
MATTER
HOW
MUCH IT
RAINS
ON ANY
OTHER
DAY...

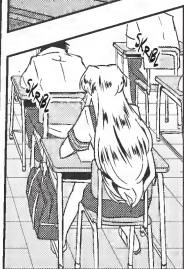
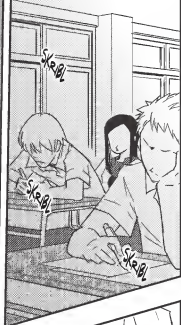


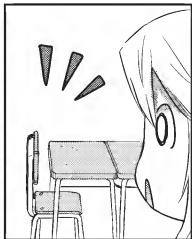
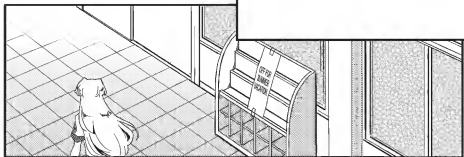
AS LONG
AS IT'S
NICE OUT
TONIGHT
...



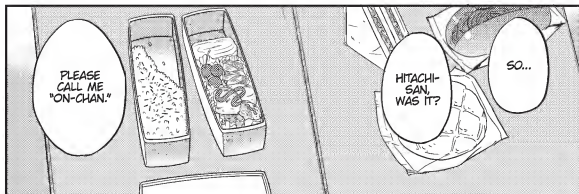
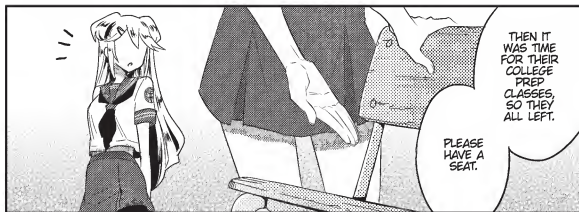
PLEASE
DON'T
RAIN.

OR, AT
LEAST,
STOP
RAINING
SOON.









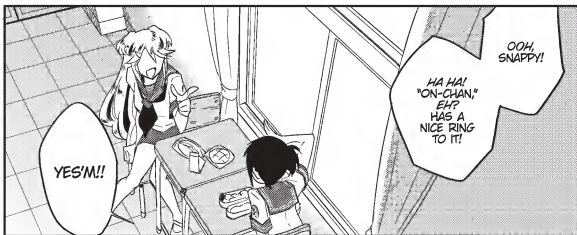


YES,
MA'AM!!

ZING!!



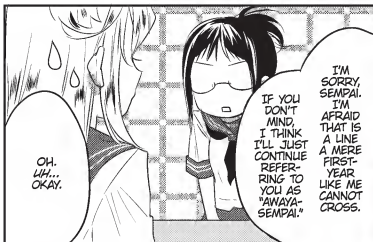
ON-
CHAN.



YES'M!!

OHH,
SNAPPY!

HA HA!
"ON-CHAN,"
EH?
HAS A
NICE RING
TO IT!



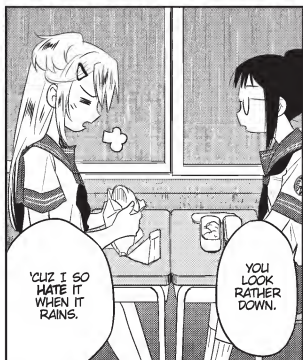
OH.
WH...
OKAY.

I'M
SORRY,
SEMPAI.
I'M
AFRAID
THAT IS
A LINE
A MERE
FIRST-
YEAR
LIKE ME
CANNOT
CROSS.



AHA
HA
HA!

DROP THE
FORMALITY
AND JUST
CALL ME
"NIKI."









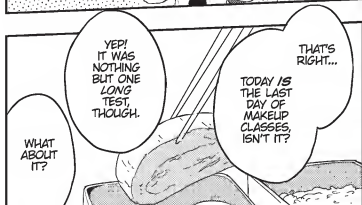
YEAH.

WE'RE
GOING
OUT.

I GUESS
THE TWO
OF YOU
ARE NOW
OFFICIALLY,
WELL....

THAT'S
GREAT.

REALLY
GREAT.



YEP!
IT WAS
NOTHING
BUT ONE
LONG
TEST,
THOUGH.

THAT'S
RIGHT...

TODAY IS
THE LAST
DAY OF
MAKEUP
CLASSES,
ISN'T IT?

WHAT
ABOUT
IT?



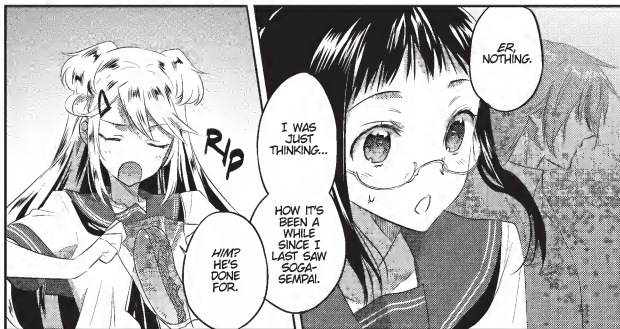
THAT MEANS
WE HAVE
THE REST
OF THE
SUMMER TO
GO ON LOTS
AND LOTS
OF DATES
TOGETHER!

AND AS
OF TODAY,
MY
MAKEUP
CLASSES
ARE
DONE!!

HEE
HEE!
!

HEW!

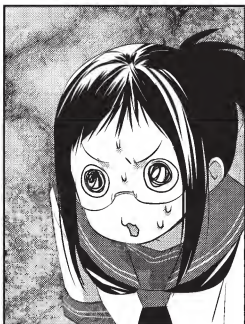
OH,
PLEASE
DO!
FAR BE
IT FROM
ME TO
IMPEDE
YOU!





YEP, YOU
WORRIED
FOR HIM?

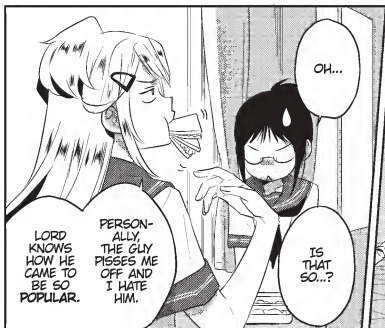
REALLY?



.....

HECK, HE
PROBABLY
ISN'T EVEN
THINKING
ABOUT
WHAT HE'S
DOING.

WHAT
HE'S DONE
MAKES
NO
SENSE.



LORD
KNOWS
HOW HE
CAME TO
BE SO
POPULAR.

PERSON-
ALLY,
THE GUY
PISSES ME
OFF AND
I HATE
HIM.

OH...

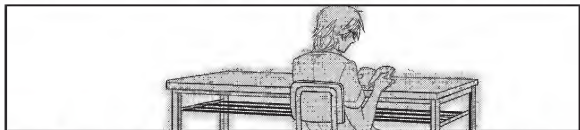
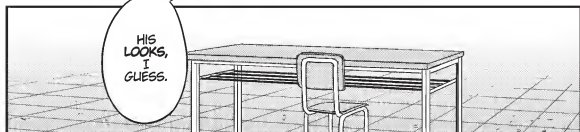
IS
THAT
SO...?

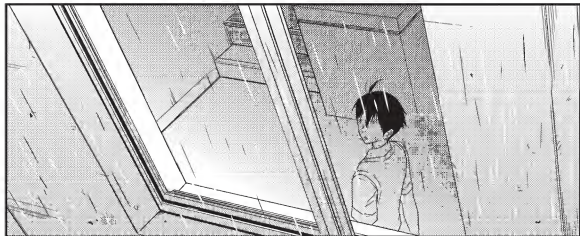
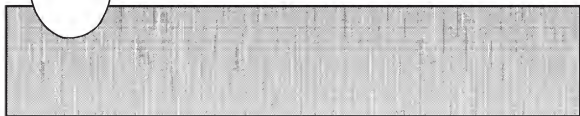
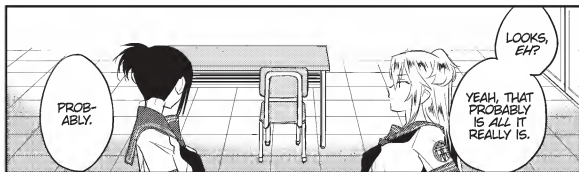


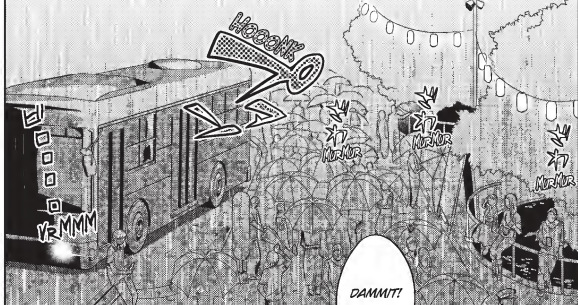
I'M NOT...
WORRIED,
PER SE.

IT'S
MORE
LIKE A
"WHAT'S
GOING ON
WITH HIM?"
SORT OF
THING.

PSHUU,
DON'T
BOTHR.
YOUR BRAIN
CELLS
ARE JUST
WASTED
ON THAT
GUY.



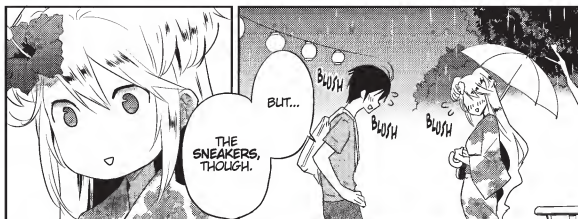




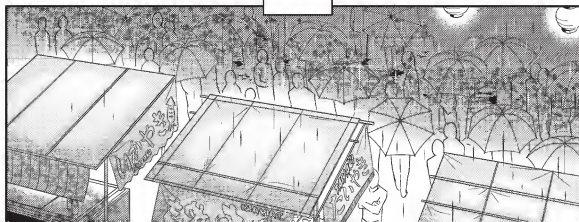
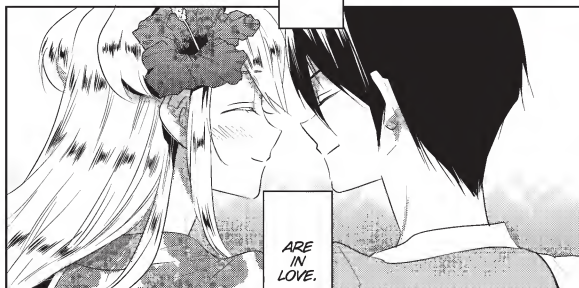
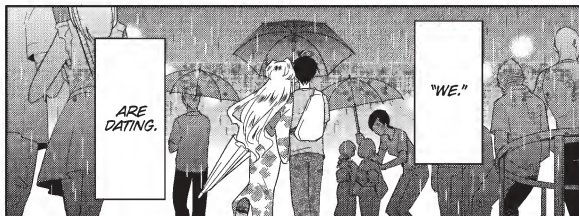


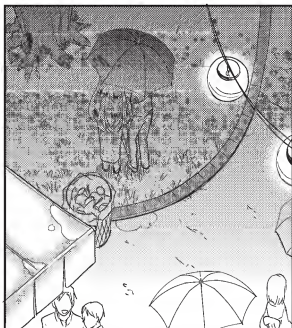
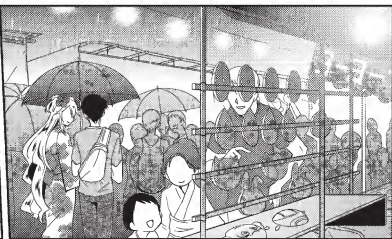
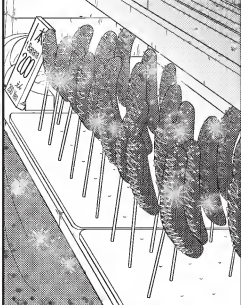




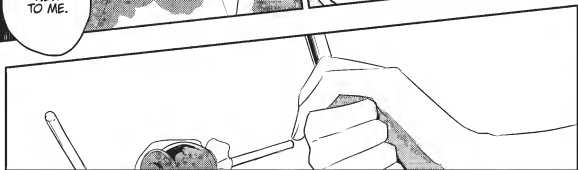




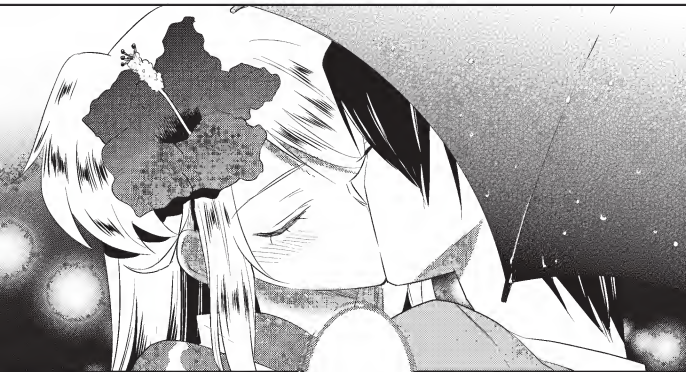








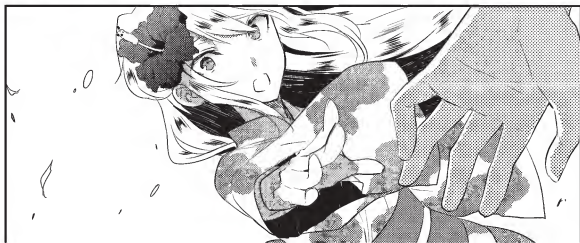


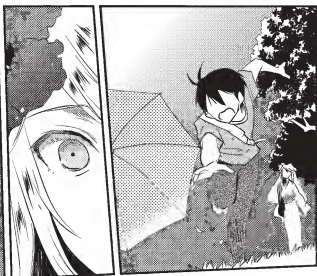
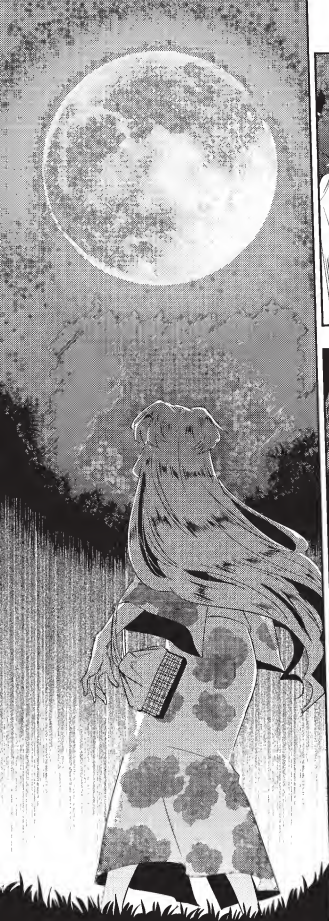


WHEN
WAS
IT...



...THAT
WE
STARTED
TO FEEL
THIS
WAY...?







WHY?!

A
HEART?!



I'M REALLY
SORRY ABOUT
THIS, BUT
THERE'S BEEN AN
EMERGENCY...

HELLO...?

HE'S AT THE
HOSPITAL,
RIGHT? I'LL
BE RIGHT
THERE.

IT'S THAT
BAD?!
YOU'RE
KIDDING
ME!







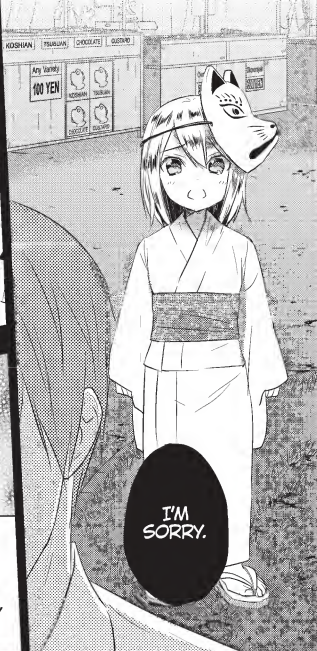
DON'T
GO!

WHY?!

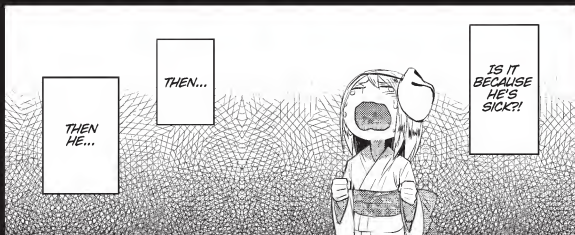


HOW COME
THAT BOY
IS MORE
IMPORTANT
TO YOU
THAN ME?!

WHY DO
YOU
HAVE TO
LEAVE
ME
BEHIND?!



I'M
SORRY.

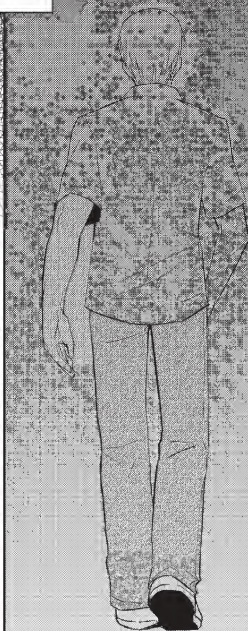


THEN
HE...

THEN...

IS IT
BECAUSE
HE'S
SICK?!

HE
CAN
JUST
DIE!!



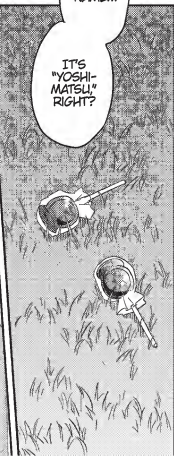
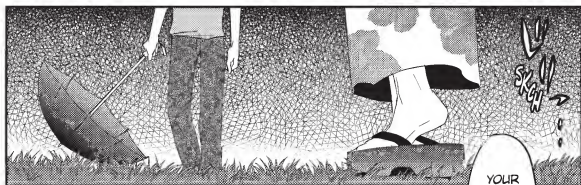
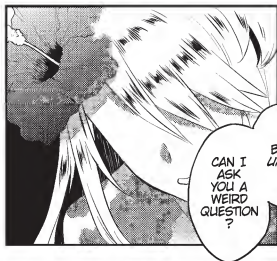


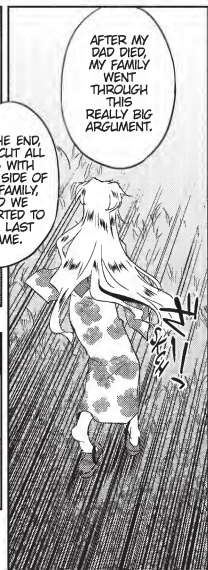
HHH...?



HOTAKA...

OH, HEY!
LOOKS
LIKE THE
RAIN
STOPPED.







NIKI
?!

I AM...

WE
ARE...

WHAT
HAP-
PENED
WAS...

HOTAKA
IS...

THEN...

IN
OTHER
WORDS
...





I
SAID
WAIT--

WAIT.

HOLD ON.
BACK UP.
I DON'T
UNDER-
STAND!

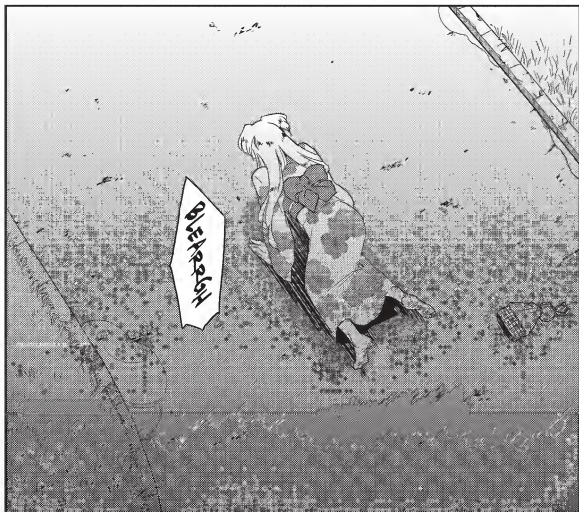


NO!!



DIE!!

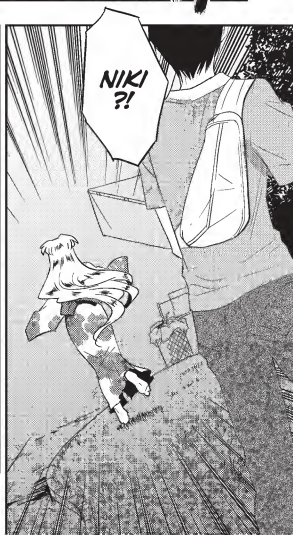
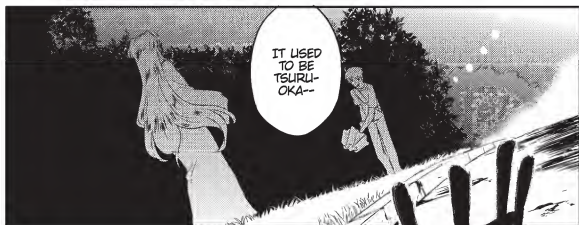




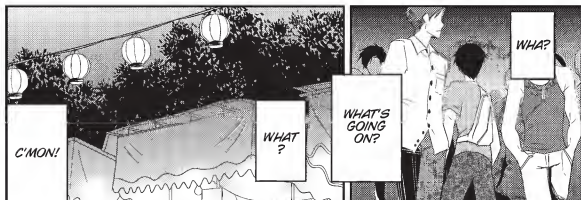


Chapter-16: I'm Beautiful (Part 1)









DID I GET
IT WRONG?
WAS I
THE ONLY
ONE WHO
THOUGHT
WE WERE
DOING
GREAT?

JUST A
MINUTE
AGO, WE
WERE...

NO.

THIS
IS ALL
WAY TOO
COMPLI-
CATED
FOR ME.

I
DON'T
KNOW.

I
DON'T
GET
IT.

NIKI
!!

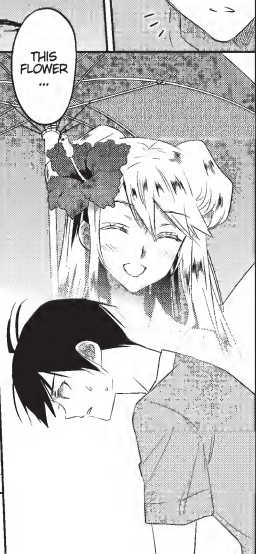
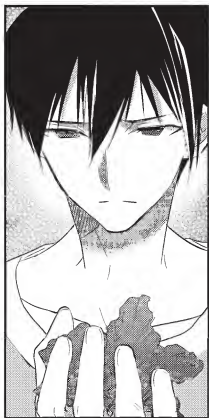
NOW
ISN'T THE
TIME FOR
ME TO GET
SWALLOWED
UP BY
DOLBITS.

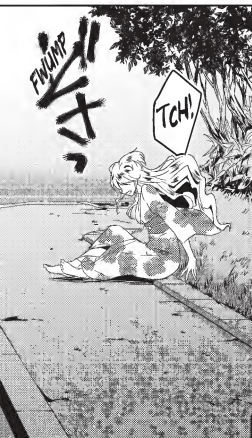
NO.

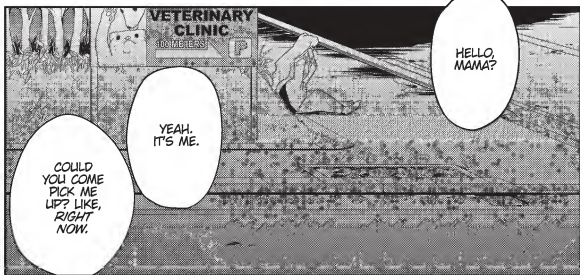
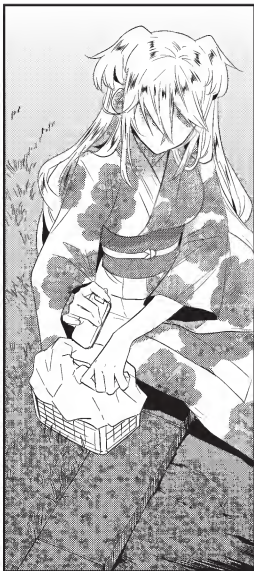
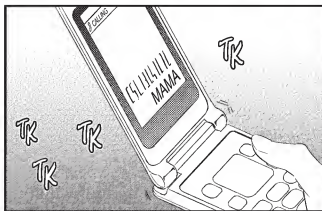
NO, NO,
NO. HOLD IT.
WHOA.

NIKI.

WAS MY
SCREW-
UP SO
BAD IT WAS
WORTH
RUNNING
AWAY
BARE-
FOOT?







VETERINARY
CLINIC

100 METERS

P

HELLO,
MAMA?

YEAH.
IT'S ME.

COULD
YOU COME
PICK ME
UP? LIKE,
RIGHT
NOW.



WHAT
HAPPENED?
WEREN'T
YOU GOING
TO A
FESTIVAL
WITH A
FRIEND?

I DID.
NOW I
WANT
TO GO
HOME.



WHAT?

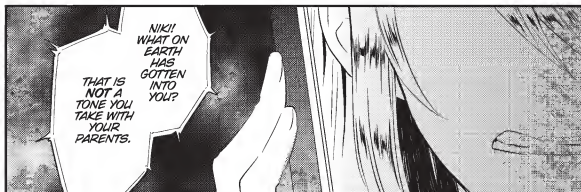
I THOUGHT
YOU SAID
YOU'D COME
HOME ON
THE BUS
TONIGHT?

YEAH,
BUT NOW
I WANT
YOU TO
COME
GET ME.

NOW.



I'M AT THE
INTERSECTION
JUST DOWN
THE STREET
FROM THE
BUS STOP
BY THE
VET CLINIC!!



THAT IS
NOT A
TONE YOU
TAKE WITH
YOUR
PARENTS.

NIKI!
WHAT ON
EARTH
HAS
GOTTEN
INTO
YOU?



MY
"PARENTS"
?

PARENTS
NOW...

IS IT?



YOU'VE
BEEN A
GREAT
PARENT
TO ME.

YEAH,
MAMA.

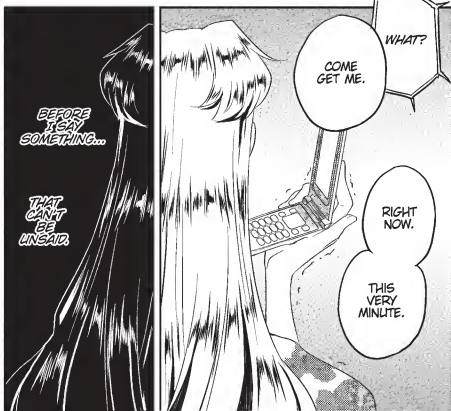


DEAR,
WHAT'S
WRONG?
WHAT
HA--

BIP

*BEFORE
I SAY
SOMETHING...*

*THAT
CAN'T
BE
UNSAID.*



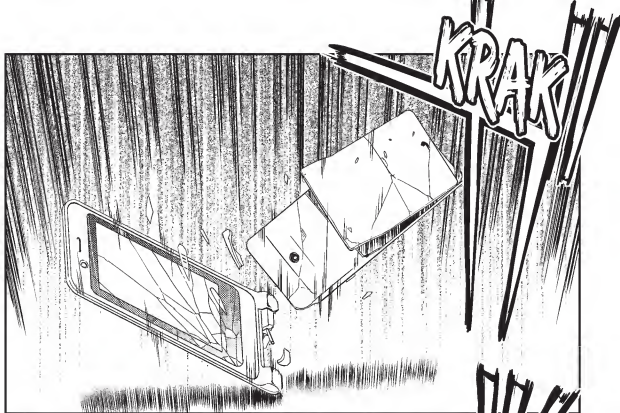
WHAT?

COME
GET ME.

RIGHT
NOW.

THIS
VERY
MINUTE.





THANKS.

YEAH,
MAMA.

YOU'VE
BEEN
THE
BEST
PARENT
EVER.



AND
LOOK
AT
ME.

AREN'T I
BEAUTIFUL?



YOU WENT
AND
SEDUCED
SOME
OTHER
BOY'S
PAPA...

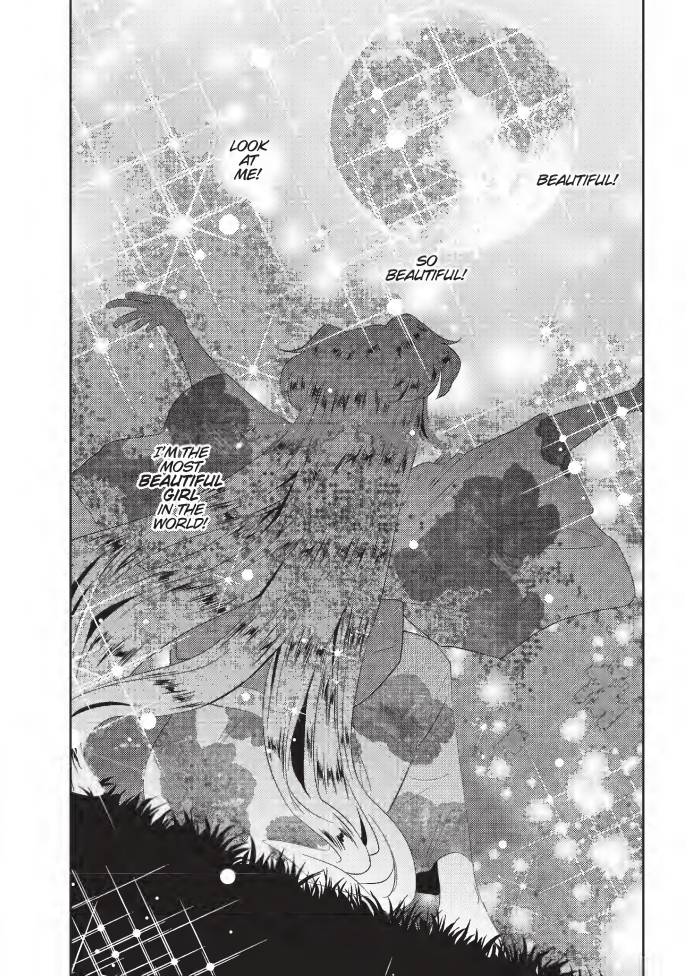
SO THAT
I GET TO
BE WHO
I AM TODAY.
THANK
YOU. OH,
THANK
YOU.



THANKS
SO
MUCH...

FOR
DOING
WHAT
YOU
DID...

SO THAT
I COULD
BE BORN
INTO THIS
WORLD.

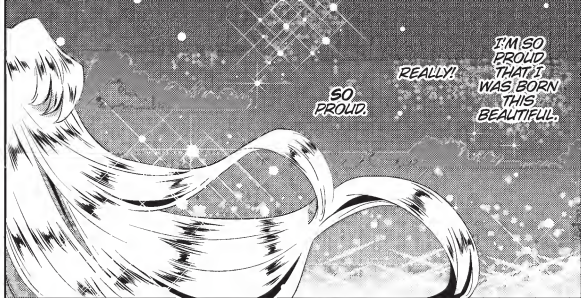


LOOK
AT
ME!

BEAUTIFUL!

SO
BEAUTIFUL!

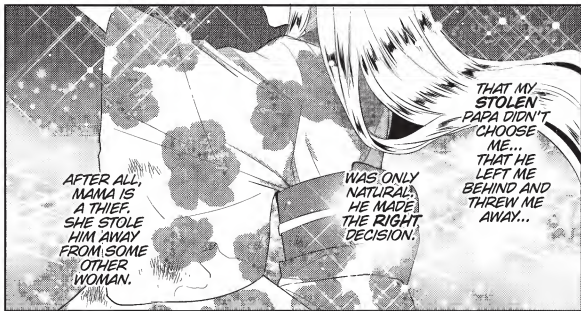
I'M THE
MOST
BEAUTIFUL
GIRL
IN THE
WORLD!



SO
PROUD.

REALLY!

I'M SO
PROUD
THAT I
WAS BORN
THIS
BEAUTIFUL.



AFTER ALL,
MAMA IS
A THIEF.
SHE STOLE
HIM AWAY
FROM SOME
OTHER
WOMAN.

WAS ONLY
NATURAL.
HE MADE
THE RIGHT
DECISION.

THAT MY
STOLEN
PAPA DIDN'T
CHOOSE
ME...
THAT HE
LEFT ME
BEHIND AND
THREW ME
AWAY...



AND I'M
THE
DAUGHTER
OF A
THIEF.

AREN'T
I SO--



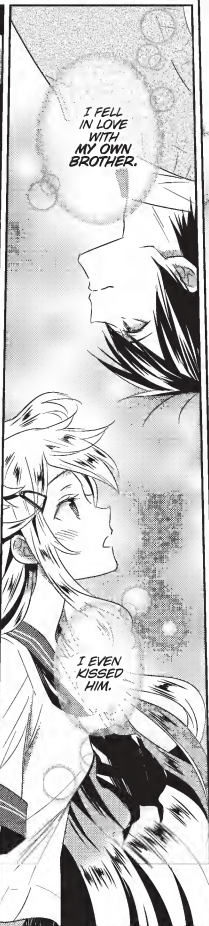




ISN'T
THAT
AWESOME?

IT ALMOST
FELT LIKE
WE WERE
DESTINED
TO BE
TOGETHER.

WELL,
DUH. OF
COURSE
WE
WERE.



I FELL
IN LOVE
WITH
MY OWN
BROTHER.

I EVEN
KISSED
HIM.



THANK
YOU SO
MUCH,
MAMA.

I'M
GLAD I
WAS
BORN.



WOULDN'T
THAT
BE A
HOOT?

ISN'T THAT
JUST THE
FUNNIEST
THING
EVER?

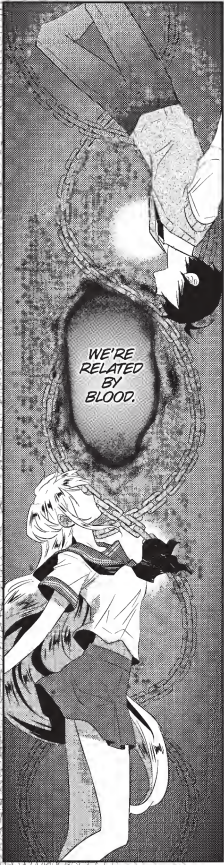
NOW I
WANNA
TELL
MAMA AND
PAPA ALL
ABOUT IT.

WE'D
ALL
LAUGH
RIGHT?

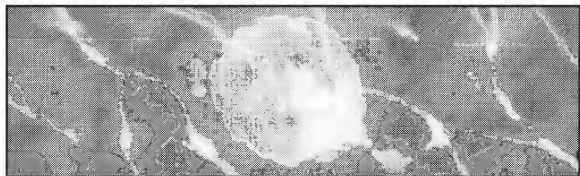
GO
AHEAD,
LAUGH...



LAUGH!!

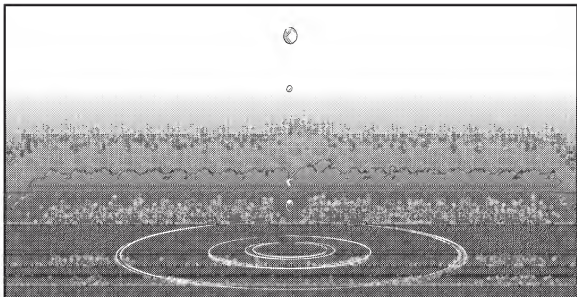


WE'RE
RELATED
BY
BLOOD.



THIS IS THE BEST!
I'M THE HAPPIEST
PERSON IN THE
WHOLE WORLD
RIGHT NOW!
I'M SO GLAD
I WAS BORN!
THANKS, MAMA!!
THANKS, PAPA!!
THANK YOU
SOOO MUCH!!!

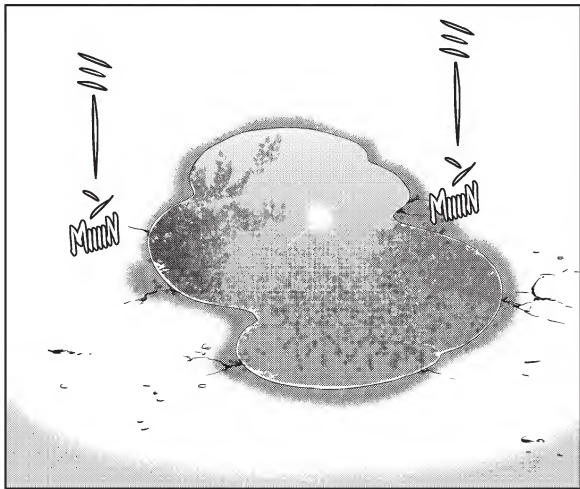


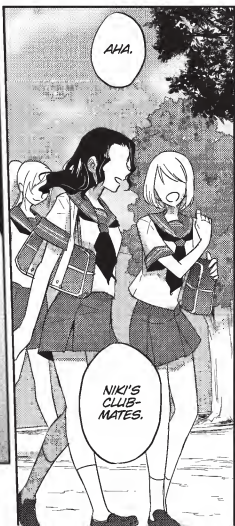
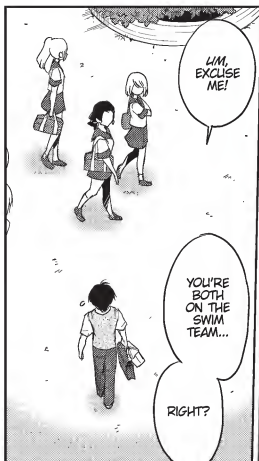


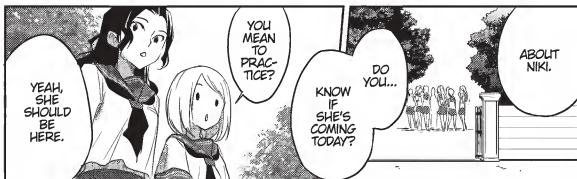
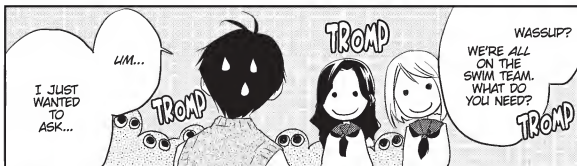
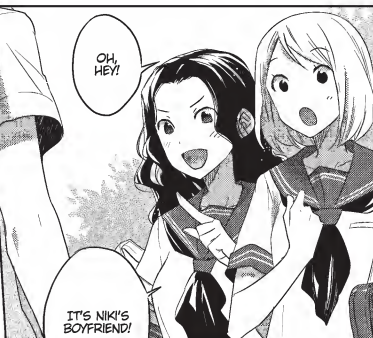
I BET THE
CAPTAIN
IS HAVING
SO MUCH
FUN
RIGHT
NOW.



Chapter 17: I'm Beautiful (Part 2)









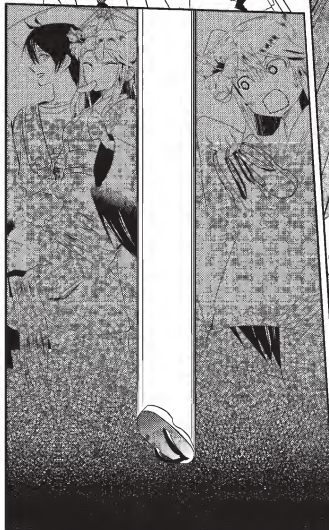


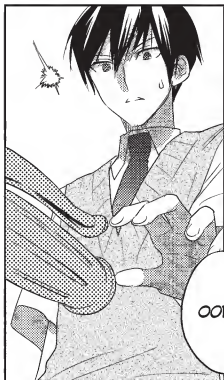


OH, C'MON,
NIKI!
HE'S YOUR
BOYFRIEND,
RIGHT?
DON'T MAKE
THE POOR
GUY SAD.

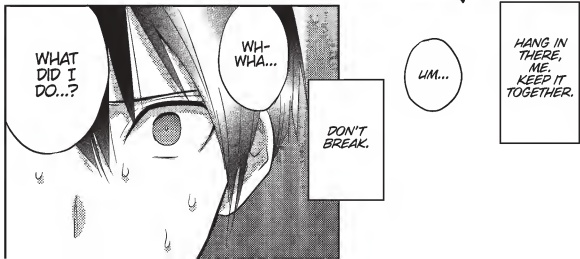


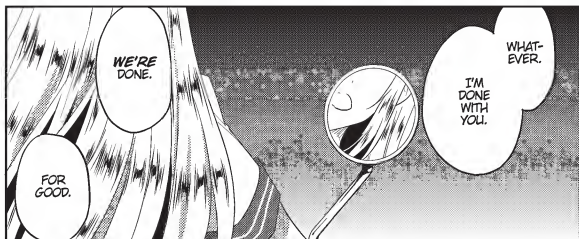


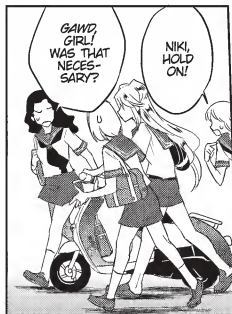




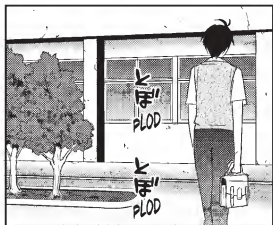








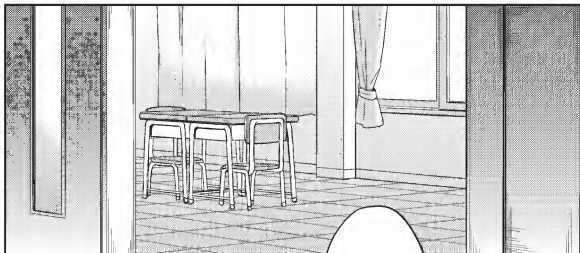




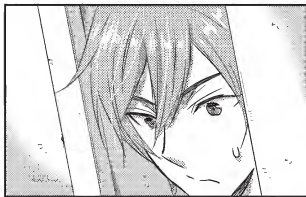








WHO
ARE YOU
LOOKING
FOR?



IF
YOU'RE
LOOKING
FOR
ON-CHAN,
SHE'S NOT
HERE
TODAY.



AWA-
WA-
WAH
?!

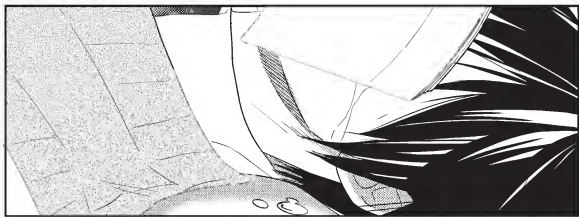
CRAP,
YOU
SCARED
ME!

WII
JOLT











WERE
YOU ABLE
TO DO
IT IN A
COOL
WAY?

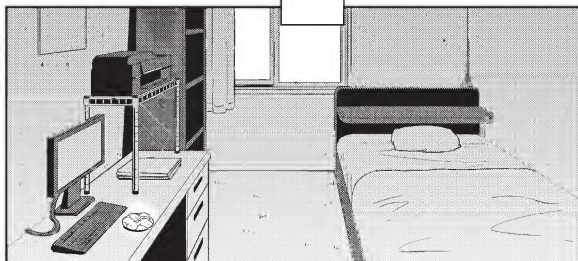


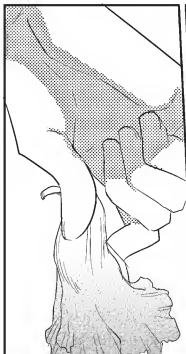




IS THERE
ANYTHING
IN YOUR
LIFE THAT
YOU'VE EVER
WORKED
HARD TO
ACCOMPLISH?







THE TWO
OF US
WOULD
STUMBLE
ACROSS
EACH
OTHER
AGAIN...

FAR
SOONER
THAN
EITHER
OF US
EXPECTED.



IT
REALLY
WAS...

THE
WORST
DAY
EVER.



IT SEEMS
AWAYA-
SEMPAI
HAS TAKEN
TODAY OFF,
TOO.

Chapter 18: Hey Brother

SHOOP
トラ
ッ

HEY.
IS
HOTAKA
AROUND?

I THINK
I'LL
FINISH UP
HERE,
THEN HEAD
HOME
MYSELF.

BOTH SHE
AND THE
CAPTAIN
CHOSE THE
SAME DAY TO
PLAY HOOKY.
A DATE, I
WONDER?



OH, THIS?
YEAH.
THOUGHT
I'D JUST
GET A
LITTLE
TRIM.



UM...
YOUR
HEAD?!



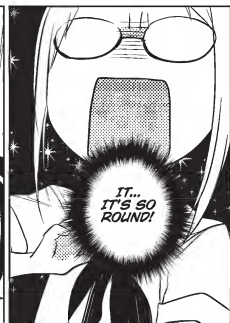
**AND
SO
SHINY!!**

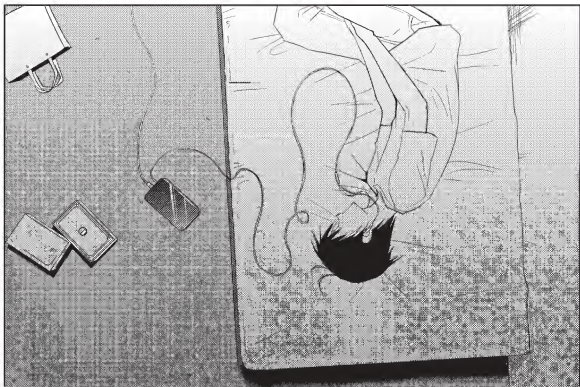
WH,
ON-CHAN?

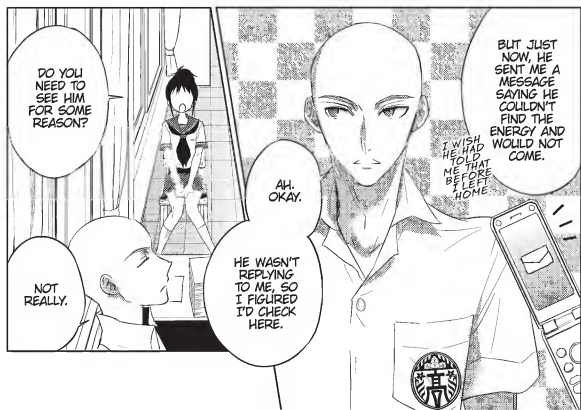
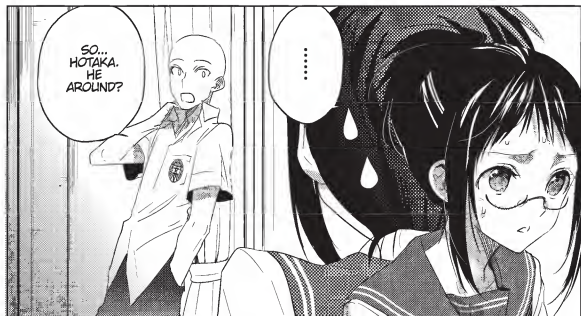
DID YOU
JUST
PASS OUT
WITH
YOUR
MOUTH
OPEN?



**IT...
IT'S SO
ROUND!**









I KNOW I
SCREWED UP,
AND I
FIGURED I'D
BETTER START
TAKING THINGS
SERIOUSLY.

AS A SIGN
OF ME
TURNING OVER
A NEW LEAF,
I WENT OUT
AND GOT THIS
HAIRCUT.

I HEAR
YOU
SKIPPED
MUCH OF
YOUR
MAKE-UP
CLASSES.

ERM...

AS
PUNISHMENT,
I GOT A
FREAKIN'
MOUNTAIN
OF
HOMEWORK
TO DO.

AH!
YOU
HEARD?
YEAH.



BESIDES,
I'M SURE
THE CAPTAIN
IS OFF ON
A DATE. HE
AND AWAYA-
SEMPAI
ARE QUITE
BESOTTED
WITH EACH
OTHER.

WELL THEN,
IS THE
CAPTAIN'S
ABSENCE
NOT A
BOON?

IT SEEMS
TO ME THAT
FATE IS
TELLING YOU
TO STOP
PROCRASTI-
NATING AND
FOCUS
ON YOUR
WORK.



AHH,
IS THAT
WHY?
I SEE.

HM?

YOU'RE A
BIT BEHIND
ON THAT
ONE,
ON-CHAN.

BLOOSH!

THEY DID. I
WAS LOOKING
FOR HOTAKA
TO SEE HOW
HE'S DOING.
I WANTED TO
CHECK UP
ON HIM.

THEY
BROKE
UP.

W-WAIT,
NO...

THAT
CAN'T
BE
RIGHT!

NOPE.
NO
MISTAKE.

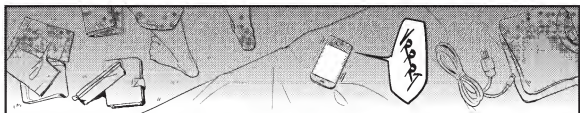
IT MUST
BE SOME
SORT OF
MISTAKE!

WHAT
?!









SO I
DON'T
THINK I
COULD
EXPLAIN
IT TO
ANYONE
ELSE.

NONE
OF IT
MAKES
SENSE
TO
ME...

I'M
HOOOME!

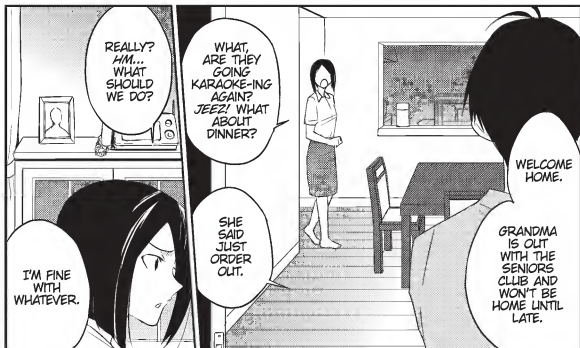
BTAM

I DON'T
THINK I
CAN TALK
ABOUT IT
JUST YET.

I'M
SORRY.



I GUESS
ON-CHAN
MUST'VE
FOUND
OUT.





I ROLLED
IT OUT
AND IT
LOOKED
PERFECTLY
USEABLE.

OH?
BUT THIS
WAS...
HIS.



S' OKAY.
I GOT A
SLEEPING
BAG OUT
OF THE
CLOSET.

YOU DO
KNOW
THERE'S NO
TELLING WHAT
STATE THE
TATAMI MATS
AND FUTONS
ARE IN,
RIGHT?



IF IT'S
UNSAFE, I
PROMISE
I'LL TURN
AROUND
AND COME
RIGHT BACK
HOME.

THERE'S
NO TELLING
UNTIL I
GO THERE
AND LOOK,
MOM.
JEEZ.

ARE ALL
THE UTILITIES
EVEN
WORKING?
DOES IT HAVE
WATER?
ELECTRICITY?

OR
MAYBE IT'S
BEING
USED AS
A THUG
HIDE-OUT.

THAT PLACE
COULD BE
AN OVER-
GROWN,
DILAPIDATED
WRECK BY
NOW. A
HAUNTED
HOUSE.



I WANT
TO BE
ABLE TO
TELL HER
THAT IT'S
OKAY AND
MAKE HER
FEEL
BETTER.

NEXT
TIME I
GO SEE
HER...

WHEN I
WENT AND
VISITED MY
OTHER
GRANDMA
THAT
TIME...

SHE
SEEMED
SERIOUSLY
WORRIED
ABOUT
THAT
HOUSE.



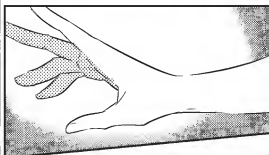
WELL,
ISN'T THAT
NICE!

YOU
SWEET
YOUNG
MAN, YOU!
WHAT A
GOOD
GRANDSON
YOU ARE!

かき
HUG



OH, MAYBE
IT WASN'T
SMART TO
TALK ABOUT
NANNIA
AROUND
MOM.



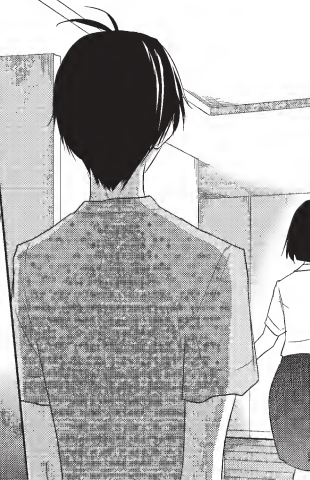
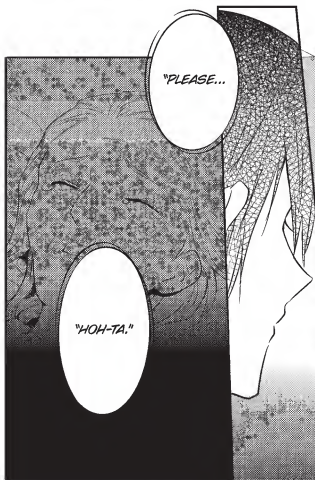
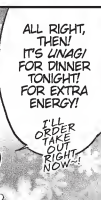
WHAT?
UP A
MOUNTAIN
ROAD?!

I'LL
RIDE
MY
BIKE
UP.



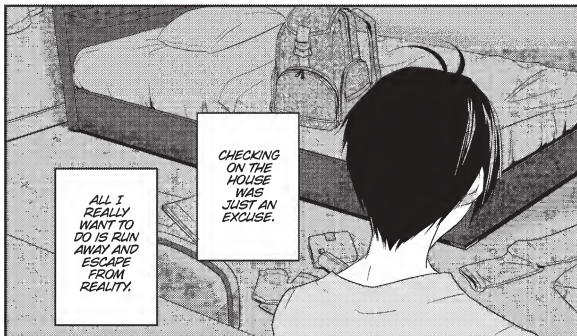
OKAY, THEN.
I'LL DRIVE YOU
UP THERE
TOMORROW,
WHEN I LEAVE
FOR WORK.

NAH,
THAT'S
OKAY.





I'M
NOT A
"SWEET
YOUNG
MAN."

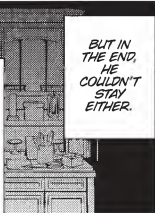


SO,
WHY DO
WE EVEN
HAVE A
SECOND
HOUSE UP
IN THE
MOUNTAINS?



HECK,
WE'RE
NOT THE
RICHEST
FAMILY IN
THE WORLD.
WE LIVE
OUT IN A
COUNTRY
TOWN.

HE LOST
ANY
PLACE TO
BELONG
IN THE
WORLD.



BUT IN
THE END,
HE
COULDN'T
STAY
EITHER.

THAT'S
THE
KIND OF
PERSON
DAD
WAS.



IT'S
BE-
CAUSE...

HE
COULDN'T
GET BY
WITHOUT
HAVING
SOMEWHERE
TO RUN TO...
SOMEWHERE
TO HIDE.

フ
フロップ

!!

AND
LOOKING
TO HIDE
IN THAT
LITTLE
MOUNTAIN
HOUSE
FOR A
WHILE.



AND
RUN-
NING...

RUN-
NING...

I'M
RUNNING
AWAY
FROM A
PAINFUL
REALITY.



AND
I...

AM
JUST
LIKE
HIM.



I DON'T
KNOW
WHAT
ELSE
TO DO.

BY SOME
CHANCE,
I SEE
YOU
AGAIN...

IF...

ALL I CAN
THINK
OF IS TO
RUN AWAY
FROM
THE PAIN.



EVEN IF
I DID, I'M
SURE I
WOULDN'T
BE ABLE
TO SAY
ANYTHING.

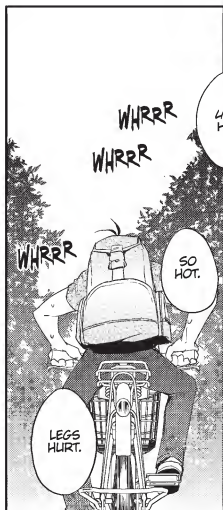
NO.



IS
LOOKING
FOR A
PLACE TO
HIDE.

ALL
I'M
DOING
...

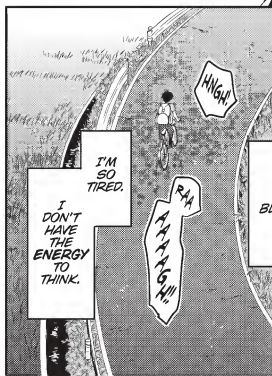
IN THE
END...



LIGH.
HOT.

SO
HOT.

LEGS
HURT.



I'M
SO
TIRED.

I
DON'T
HAVE
THE
ENERGY
TO
THINK.

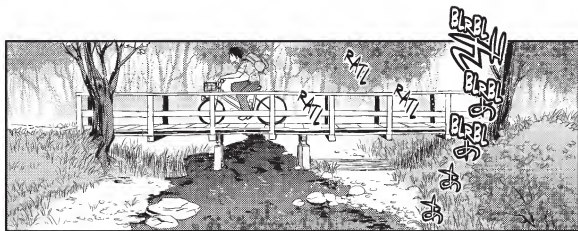
HNGH!

RAA
AAAAH!

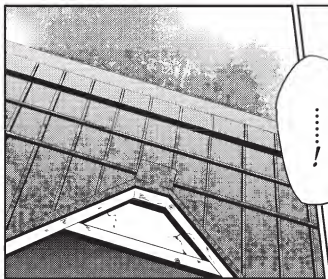


IS
BLANK.

MY
MIND...











HEY.

BROTHER.

PLEASE.

IS ALL
YOUR
POOR
NANNA
HAS LEFT
TO GIVE
YOU.

THAT
HOUSE...





Chapter 19: My Little Girl





"WELL?
DO YOU
GET IT
NOW?"

NIKI
CALLED
ME...







YOUR FATHER...
MY FATHER...
THEY'RE THE SAME PERSON.

OF COURSE WE DID.

AH, WELL.
SINGLE PARENT
HOUSEHOLDS
AREN'T THAT
UNCOMMON
ANYMORE,
I GUESS.

AND I DIDN'T
REALLY THINK
ALL THAT
HARD ABOUT
IT WHEN I
FOUND OUT
YOUR FATHER
WAS DEAD.

HELL, I EVEN
STARTED TO
WEIRDLY SYM-
PATHIZE WITH
YOU, THINKING
WE'D GONE
THROUGH THE
SAME SORT
OF CRAP
IN LIFE.

TH-THIS
ISN'T
MAKING
SENSE...

WH-
WHAT
ARE
YOU...?

HUH...?

GOD,
I WAS SO
STUPID!
HOW DID
I NOT
SEE IT
BEFORE?



I WAS
LIKE,
"WOW,
WE HAVE
SOMETHING
IN
COMMON!"

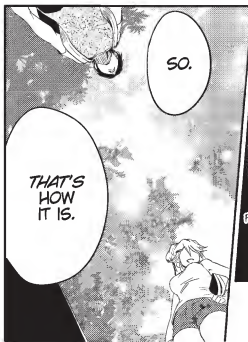




SEE?
WE
MATCH.



I GOT A
CALL FROM
THE HOSPITAL
GRANDMA WAS
ADMITTED TO.
THE NURSE
SAID SHE WAS
"CALLING FOR
HER GRAND-
CHILD."



SO.

THAT'S
HOW
IT IS.

SAYING SHE
WAS WORRIED
ABOUT HOW
THE MOUNTAIN
HOUSE WAS
DOING. LET
ME GUESS.
SHE SAID
THE SAME
TO YOU?

HA HA!
MAN,
CAN YOU
BELIEVE
IT?
OLD
FOLKS.
DO
THEY
EVEN
KNOW
WHAT
THEY
DO?

SO,
I HURRIED
OVER TO
SEE HER
AND SHE
GAVE
ME THIS
KEY...





NIKI
AND
I...

ARE
BLOOD
RELATIVES.
BROTHER
AND
SISTER.

...WHO
LEFT HER
BEHIND
TO COME
GIVE HIS
LIFE FOR
ME.

C'MON,
HOTAKA.

IT WAS MY
DAD WHO
ABANDONED
NIKI WHEN
SHE WAS
LITTLE.

I SAID
GO
HOME!

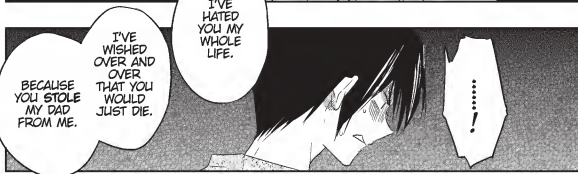
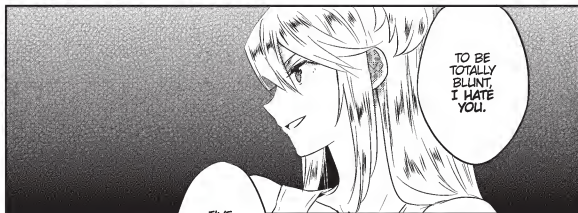
THAT...

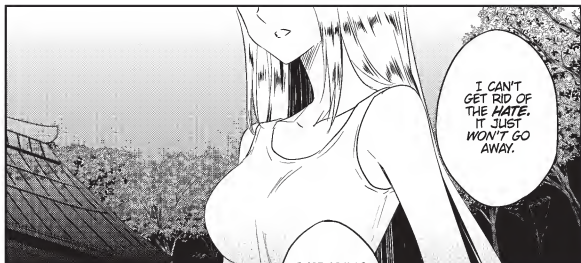
QUIT
MAKING
ME
TALK SO
MUCH.

MY
DAD...

THAT
CAN'T
BE...

IT
CAN'T--





I CAN'T
GET RID OF
THE HATE.
IT JUST
WON'T GO
AWAY.



EVERYTHING
WE HAD
TOGETHER,
EVERYTHING
I KNEW
ABOUT
YOU...

EVERY-
THING.



IS
COMPLETELY
BURIED
UNDER
HATE NOW.
THERE'S
NOTHING
LEFT.

ALL
OF
IT...



...HAS
GONE
ROTTEN.

BLACK.

BLOATED.

ROTTEN.
DISGUSTING.

THAT'S
IT...

THAT'S
ALL
THERE IS
INSIDE
ME.

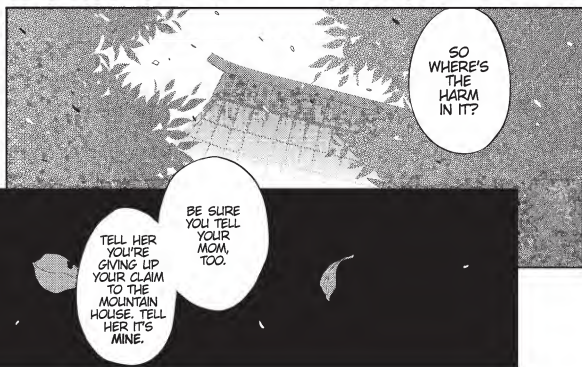




YOU DON'T
CARE, RIGHT?
I MEAN,
YOU GOT
TO TAKE
EVERYTHING
ELSE.

THERE ISN'T
ANYTHING
LEFT OF
HIM FOR ME
EXCEPT
THIS.

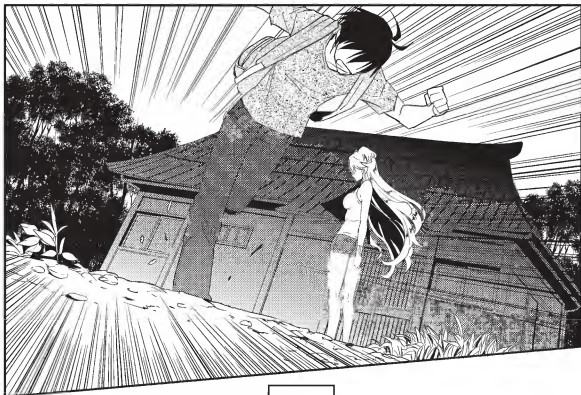
GIVE THIS
MOUNTAIN
HOUSE
TO ME.



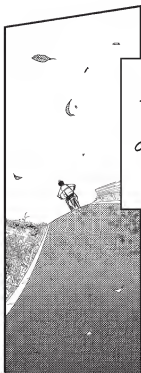
SO
WHERE'S
THE
HARM
IN IT?

BE SURE
YOU TELL
YOUR
MOM,
TOO.

TELL HER
YOU'RE
GIVING UP
YOUR CLAIM
TO THE
MOUNTAIN
HOUSE. TELL
HER IT'S
MINE.



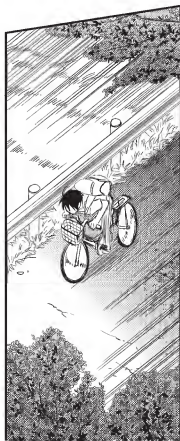
I
RAN.

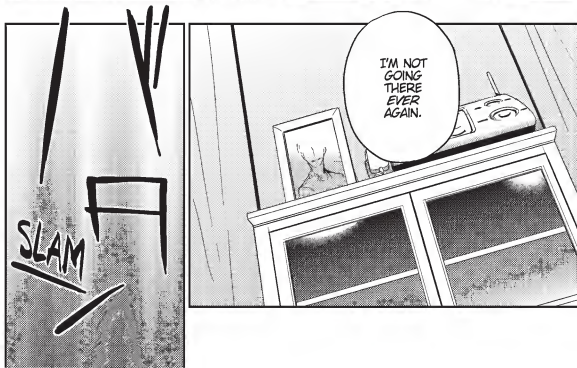
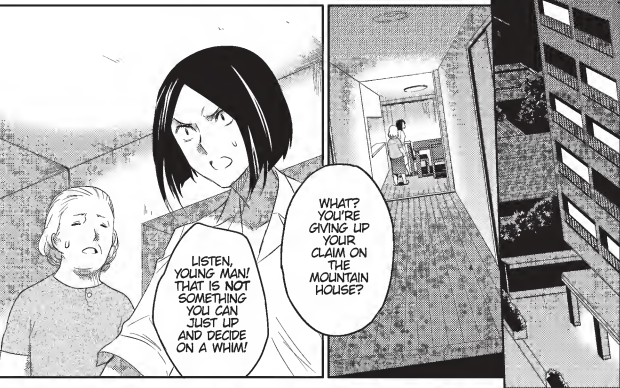


I RAN...
OR I
FELL...
I
COULDN'T
TELL
WHICH.



ALL THE
WAY
DOWN-
HILL.







THE
NIGHT-
MARE
TOOK AN
EVEN
MORE
TERRIBLE
TURN.

THAT
NIGHT
...



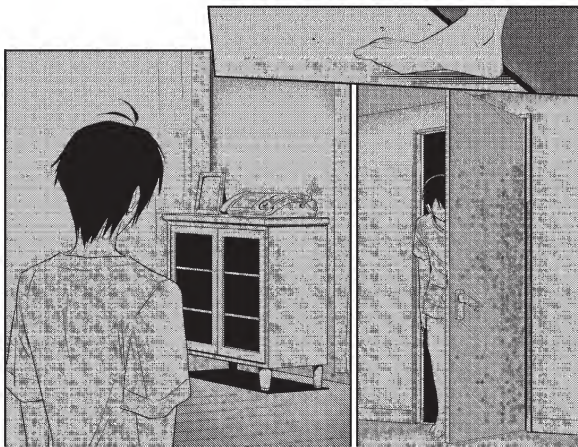
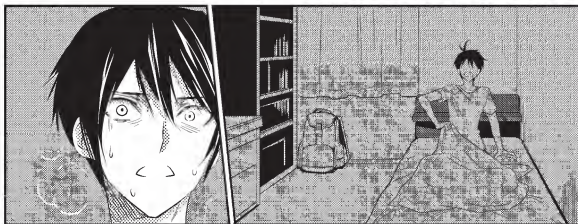
OLDER
NIKI...

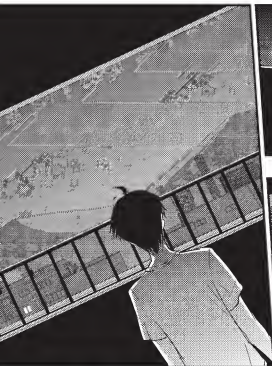


..WITH A
SICKLE.
SHE WAS
TRYING
TO KILL
HER.

..WAS
CHASING
YOUNGER
NIKI...









EVEN
IN MY
DREAMS
...



I
COULDN'T
SAVE
HER.

THERE'S
NOTHING...

NOTHING
AT ALL
THAT I
CAN DO
FOR NIKI.



THE ONE
WHO
CAUSED
HER ALL
THAT
GRIEF
AND
PAIN...

...WAS
ME.

THE ONE
WHO DROVE
NIKI INTO
THE DARK
UGLINESS
OF HATE...

WAS
ME.

I'VE
ALWAYS
LOOKED
UP TO
YOU.

IT'S ALMOST
AS IF YOU
WERE BORN
FROM THE
SUN ITSELF.

YOU
GLITSHINE
EVERYONE
AROUND
YOU!

GLORIOUS
QUEEN OF
SUMMER.

NIKI...



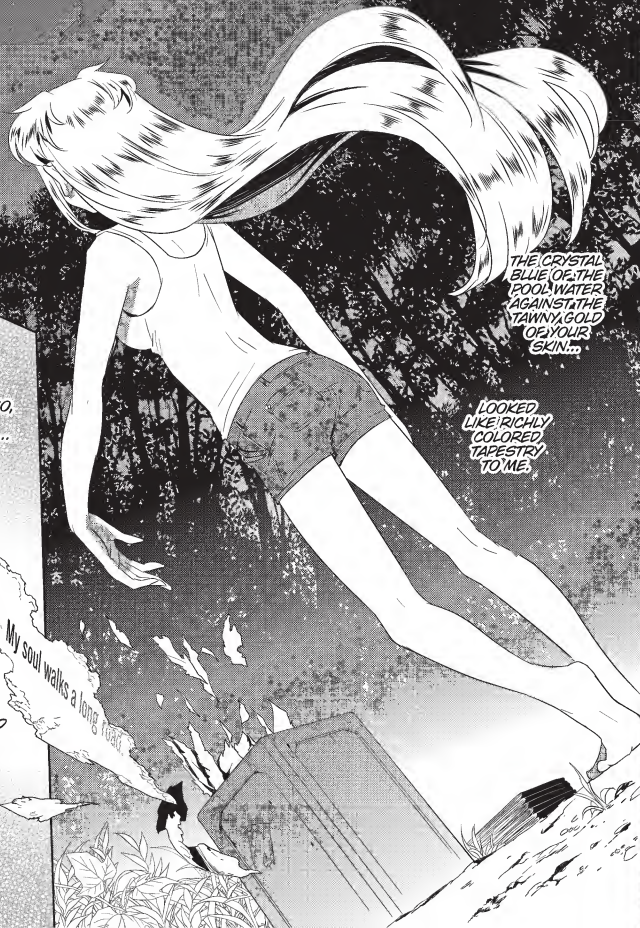


I WAS
OBSESSED
WITH YOU.

FOR SO,
SO LONG...

I LOVED
YOU
FROM
AFAR.

My soul walks a long road



THE CRYSTAL
BLUE OF THE
POOL WATER
AGAINST THE
TANNED GOLD
OF YOUR
SKIN...

LOOKED
LIKE RICHLY
COLORED
TAPESTRY
TO ME.



YOUR
GLITTERING
EYES.

EVEN THE
SHADOW
YOU CAST.

YOUR
BRIGHT
VOICE.

YOUR
GOLDEN
HAIR.

YOUR
VIBRANT
CHEERINESS.



WHY...?

WHY DID
I HAVE
TO BE
BORN?



DON'T
CRY,
NIKI.

I'LL
ACCEPT
THE
BURDEN.

I'LL TAKE IT
ALL ON
MYSELF--
EVERYTHING.

I'LL SHED
ENOUGH
TEARS FOR
THE BOTH
OF US.

I'LL MAKE
SURE THERE
ISN'T ONE
HEAVY THING
LEFT...

FOR YOU TO
SHOULDER.

SO
FORGET,
NIKI.
FORGET
ALL OF
THIS.

FORGET
EVERYTHING
AND JUST
SMILE
INSTEAD.

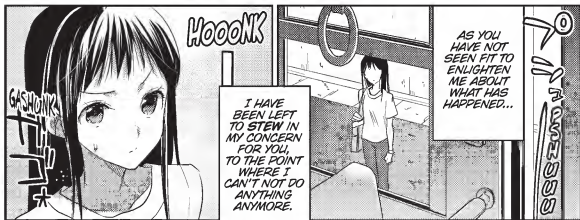
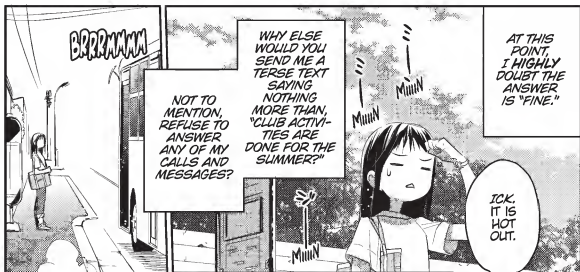
PLEASE.

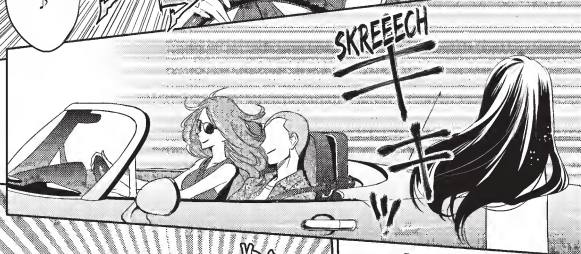
AWAYA
NIKI...

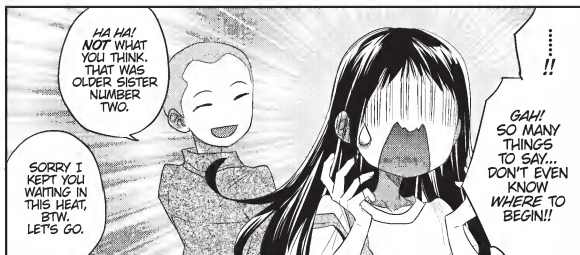
YOU
DESERVE
TO LIVE
IN THE
LIGHT
ALWAYS.

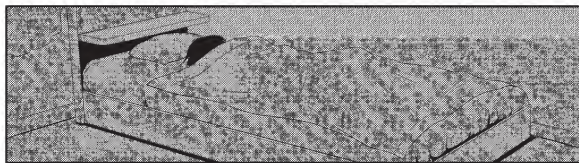
















HUH?
BUT...

NO.
THIS IS
THE
RIGHT
ONE.



"HER"
HOUSE?
"HER"
WHO?

ACK!
IT LEFT
BEFORE
WE
COULD
GET
OFF

THIS
IS THE
RIGHT
BUS.

I TALKED
WITH SOME
GIRLS IN
THE SWIM
CLUB AND
GOT HER
ADDRESS.



THAT'S
THE ONE.
LET'S GO
PRY THE
REAL STORY
STRAIGHT
OUTTA THE
HORSE'S
MOUTH.

N-NO!
WE
CAN'T
DO
THAT!

WAIT A
MINUTE...

YOU
MEAN
AWAYA-
SEMPAI
?!

GEH!!
っ

LET'S
GO
BUST
IN ON
HER.

THAT
BITCH.





STOPPING
AT THE
NEXT
STOP.

THAT IS
NOT
AWAYA-
SEMPAI'S
FAULT!



A-AND IT'S
BECAUSE
OF ME, TOO.
IT'S MY
FAULT.

I WENT AND...
AND HURT
YOU BEFORE
I EVEN FULLY
REALIZED
WHAT MY
OWN
FEELINGS
WERE...

**BUT
!!**

URK!

IS
BECAUSE
YOU
WENT AND
GOT ALL
MANNER OF
STRANGE
IDEAS IN
YOUR
HEAD!

THE
REASON
OUR
RELATION-
SHIP HAS
BEEN
AWKWARD...



YOU HAVE
MADE IT
PERFECTLY
CLEAR THAT
YOU DO NOT
RETURN MY
FEELINGS
FOR YOU.

THAT
IS ALL
OVER,
NOW.

THAT YOU
DON'T
SEE ME
IN THAT
WAY.

THE
FEELINGS
YOU MEANT
TO EXPRESS
HAVE BEEN
THOROUGHLY
EXPRESSED.



LET'S
LEAVE WELL
ENOUGH
ALONE AND
SALVAGE WHAT
RELATIONSHIP
WE DO HAVE.

WE HAVE
BEEN
THROUGH
THIS ALREADY
AND CAME TO
THE SAME
CONCLUSION.

I
GET
THAT.



YES,
YOU
DO!!

NO.
I.
DO.
NOT!

NO,
I
DON'T.

NO,
THAT'S
NOT IT!
YOU'VE
GOT IT
WRONG!







BUT I'VE
GOTTA LOOK
COOL, SO I
MAKE A BIG
SHOW ABOUT
HOW GETTING
DUMPED
DOESN'T MEAN
A THING
TO ME!

THAT'S
ALWAYS
BEEN THE
WAY I'VE
DONE IT!

ALL THE
GIRLS WHO
SAID THEY
LIKED ME,
EVENTUALLY
TURNED
AROUND AND
HATED ME!

IN
FRONT
OF YOU,
ON-
CHAN.

NOT FOR
ANYBODY
ELSE.
JUST
YOU.

BECAUSE
IT'S YOU,
ON-
CHAN!

AND I
KNEW
THAT'D
MAKE YOU
HATE
ME EVEN
MORE!

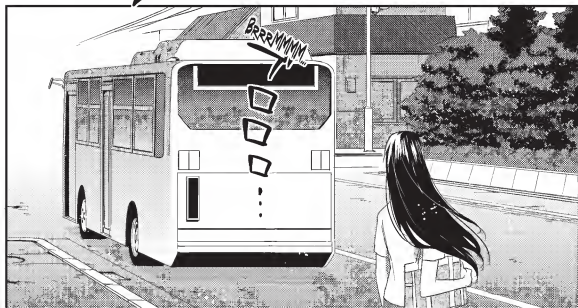
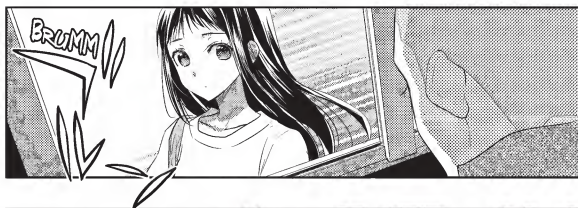
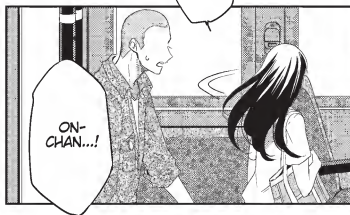
I'D MAKE A
TOTAL IDIOT
OF MYSELF
TRYING TO GET
YOU TO STAY
WITH ME.
I'D GET
DESPERATE!

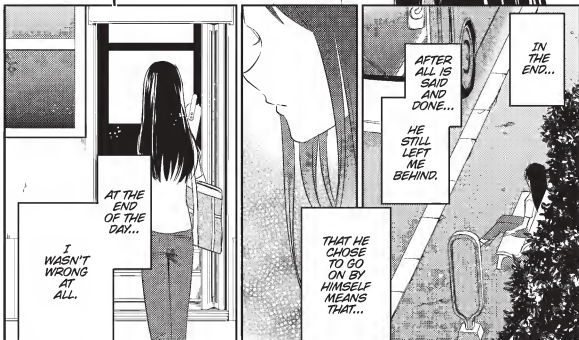
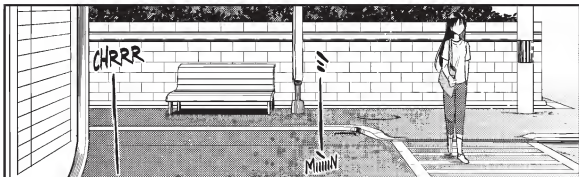
BUT IF...
IF THAT
GIRL WAS
YOU,
ON-CHAN...

I
COULDN'T
DO THAT.
THERE'S
NO WAY
I COULD
ACT LIKE
I DIDN'T
CARE.

I WANTED
TO MAKE
SURE I
LOOKED COOL
TO YOU!
I COULDN'T
STAND YOU
THINKING
I WAS A
DORK!









ALL
I
WANT...

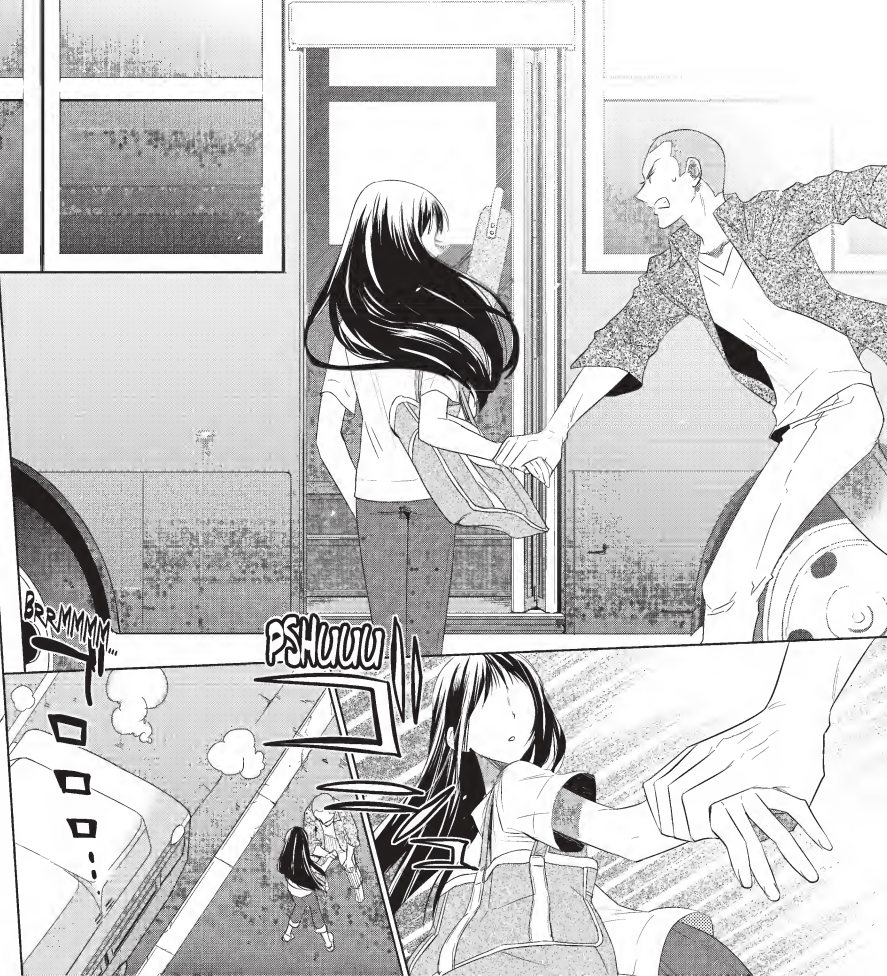
I TOLD
MYSELF
THAT AS
LONG AS
YOU WERE
HAPPY, I'D
BE FINE!

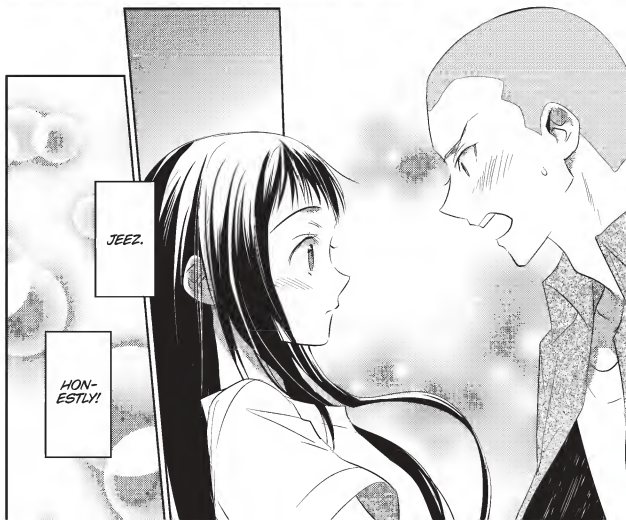
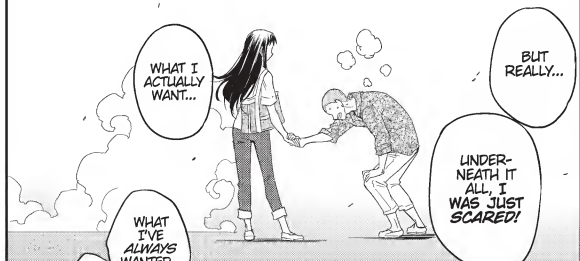
THEN I
COULD BE
CONTENT
WITH YOU
NOT
HATING
ME.



...IS
FOR YOU
TO BE
HAPPY!!

THAT'S
IT!





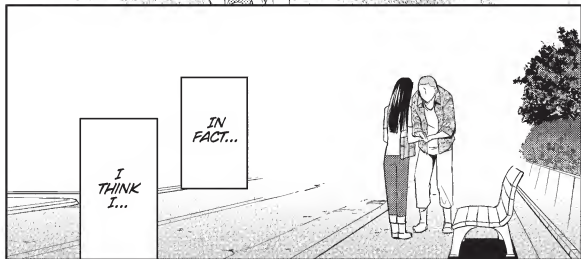


HOW
LAME
CAN
YOU
GET?

NOT
AT
ALL.

I DON'T
DISLIKE
PEOPLE
WHO ACT
LAME.

BUT...

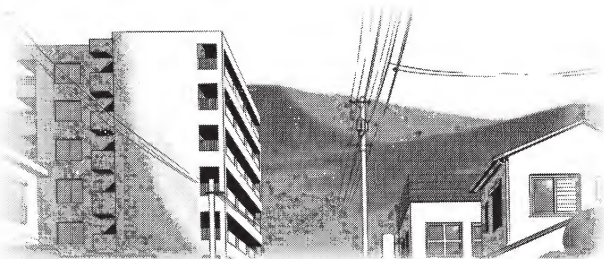


I
THINK
I...

IN
FACT...



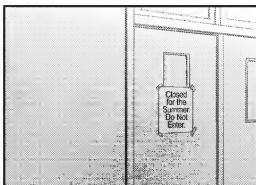
HELLO,
EVERYONE.
HOW WAS
YOUR
SUMMER?



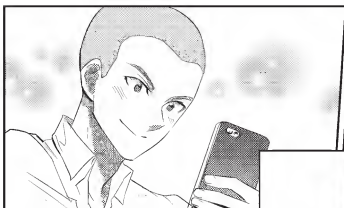
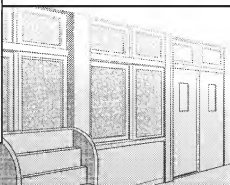
Chapter 20: Evergreen



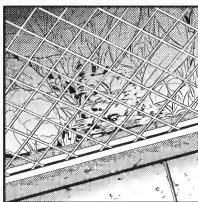
MY
SLUMMER
...

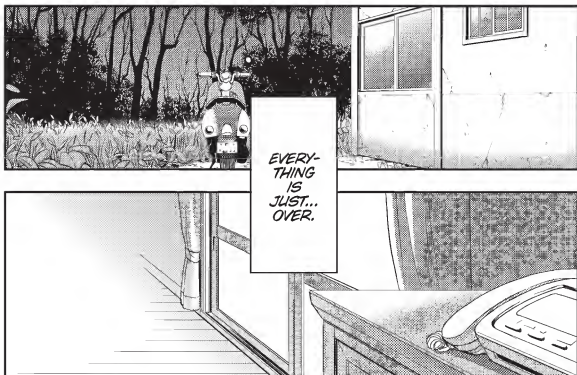


IS
OVER.

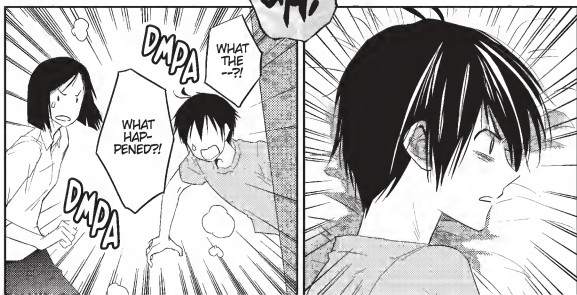


COM-
PLETELY.





BLE
EAA
RRR
GH!





GRAND-
MA'S
THROWING
UP?!

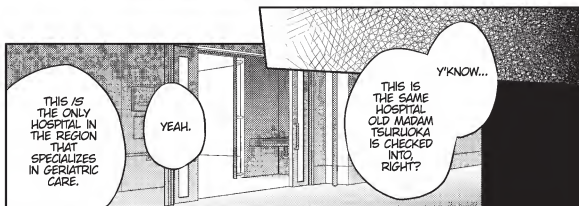
AND
IT'S
GREEN?!

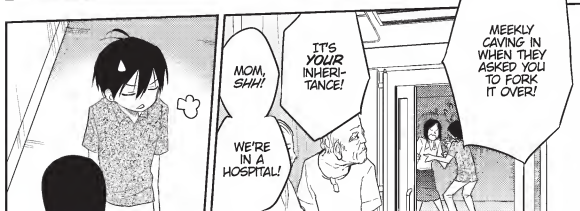
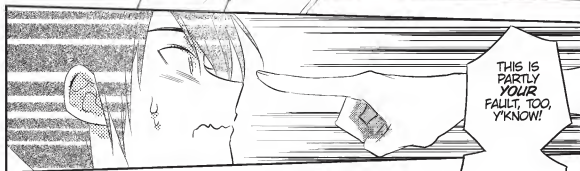
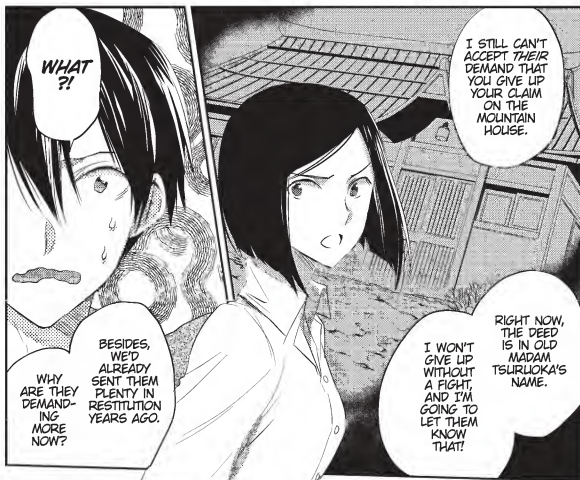


COME TO
THINK OF IT,
I THOUGHT
THIS BATCH
HAD TASTED
PARTICULARLY
ACIDIC.

BUH?

YOUR
FRIEND'S
HOMEMADE
AOJIRU
VEGGIE
JUICE HAD
GONE BAD?







WE'RE
IN
DIFFERENT
CLASSES
...

BUT WE
GO TO
THE SAME
SCHOOL.
WE'RE IN
THE SAME
GRADE.

WHAT?



I WAS SO
SHOCKED
WHEN I
FOUND OUT,
I WASN'T
THINKING
STRAIGHT.

YOU
ARE?!



SEE, L/M,
MS. AWAYA'S
DAUGHTER...

SHE AND
I MET.
WE KNOW
EACH
OTHER.

WHAT?



WHAT?!
MOM,
WHAT
ARE YOU
SAYING?!

OH MY
GOSH,
NOW
WHAT?!

I THINK
THE FIRST
THING WE
HAVE TO
DO IS TELL
THEM THEY
NEED TO
SEND THAT
GIRL TO
ANOTHER
SCHOOL.

WHAT'S
THE BEST
WAY TO DO
THAT? OR
SHOULD WE
ASK THE
SCHOOL
INSTEAD?



WHY
DIDN'T YOU
TELL
ME THIS
BEFORE?!

MOOOOM!
KEEP
IT
DOWN!

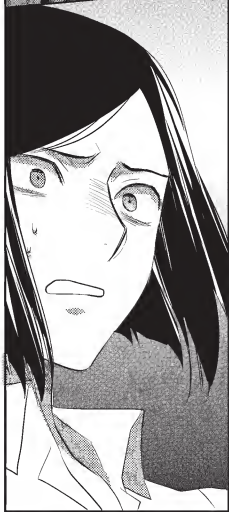
BECAUSE
I KNEW
YOU
WOULD
PITCH
A FIT
ABOUT IT!



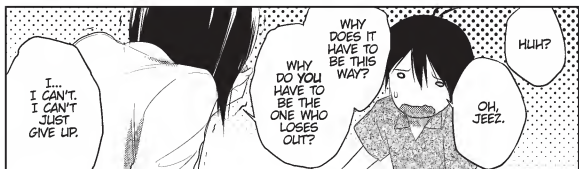
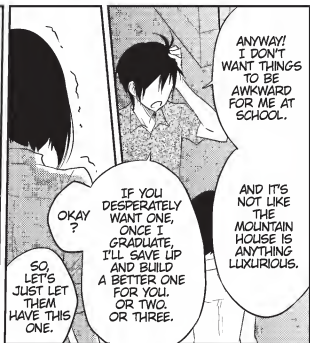
WHY?!
WHY
SHOULD
YOU NEED
TO DO
ANYTHING?!
THIS ISN'T
YOUR
FAULT!!

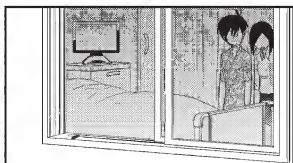
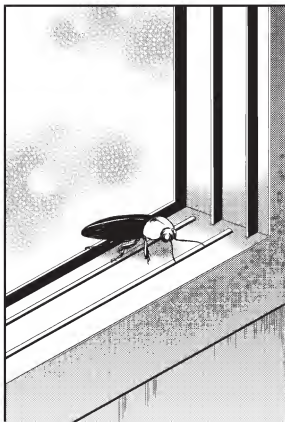
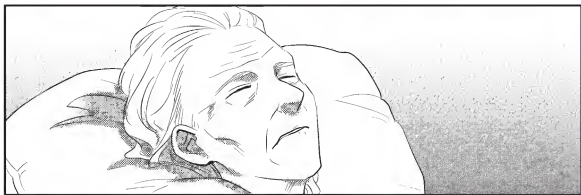
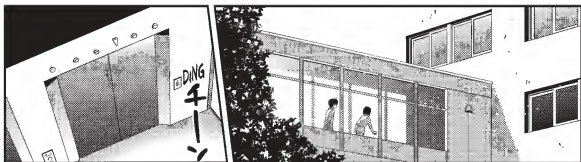
IF YOU
ABSOLUTELY
INSIST,
THEN I'LL
MOVE!

DON'T
YOU DARE,
MOM! I'LL
NEVER
FORGIVE
YOU FOR
THAT!



IT'S
NOT
NIKI'S
FAULT,
EITHER!!







SEEING
THAT OLD
AND FRAIL
SLEEPING
FACE WAS
ENOUGH
TO KNOCK
THE WIND
OUT OF
MOM'S
SAILS.

SHE QUIETLY
LEFT FOR
WORK IN THE
AFTERNOON,
WHILE
GRANDMA,
UNDER THE
PRETENSE OF
CONFRONTING
THE FRIEND
WHO MADE THE
VEGGIE JUICE,
WENT OUT WITH
THEM TO
KARAOKE.

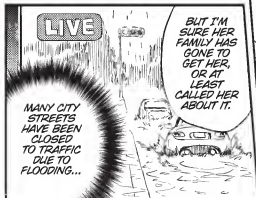
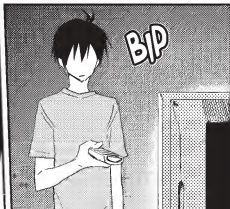
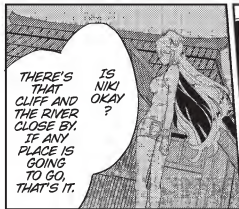
A large, dark, and dramatic cloud formation dominates the middle section of the page. The clouds are thick and billowing, with a dark, ominous base. A small bird is visible flying within the clouds. The background shows a dark, silhouetted landscape.

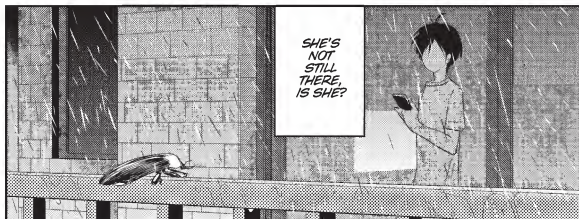
AT THAT
TIME,
NONE
OF US
HAD ANY
IDEA...

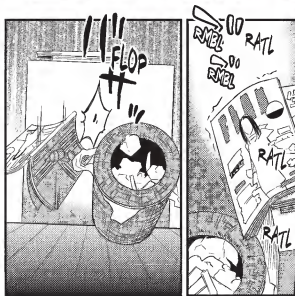
...THAT IN
JUST A FEW
HOURS, WE
WOULD ALL
BE SWEEP
UP IN A
STORM OF
GREAT
MAGNITUDE.

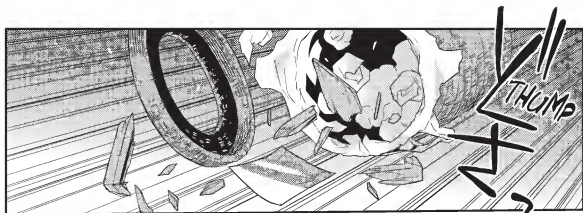














IS HE
TRYING
TO TELL
ME
SOME-
THING?

IS DAD
TRYING
TO GIVE
ME A
SIGN?

OH
GOD.



...IN
DANGER?

IS
NIKI...





FWOOOOO

BLOOOOSH

THE
BRIDGE!
WE CAN'T
COME
BACK
THIS WAY.

.....
!

7// SPLIT
= 1 x 11

NIKI!

NIKI!!

I KNEW
IT!
SHE IS
STILL
HERE!



THE
BRIDGE
IS
ALREADY
OUT!

WHAT
THE HECK
ARE YOU
STILL DOING
HERE?! YOU
HAVE TO
EVACUATE,
RIGHT
NOW!!

NO
WAY...

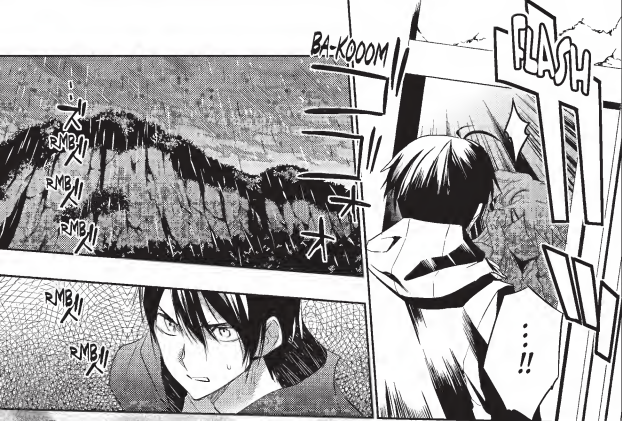
HOTAKA?

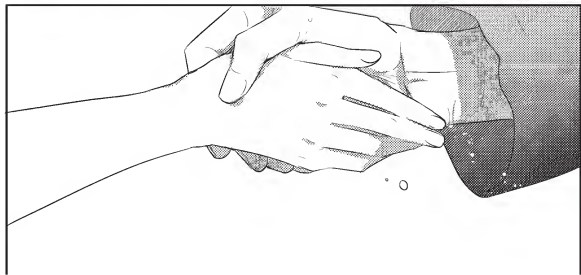
I KNEW
IT WAS
DANGER-
OUS.

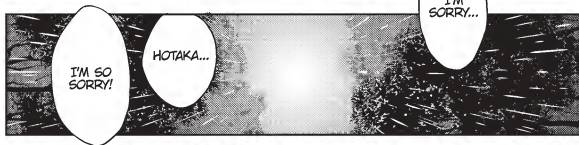
R-
REALLY?
UM...

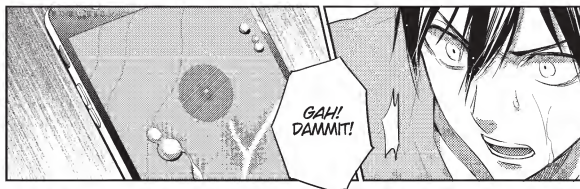
BUT THE
PATH
WAS TOO
MUDDY
FOR MY
SCOOTER.

AND I
DID
TRY TO
LEAVE...















HE'S
SAYING,
"THIS
WAY!"



HE
WANTS
US TO
FOLLOW
HIM!

DESPE-
RATELY
TRAILING
AFTER
THAT TINY
LIGHT...

NIKI AND
I STEPPED
ONTO A
PATH THAT
DAD WAS
NEVER ABLE
TO TAKE.

SLOG-
GING
THROUGH
MUD...

BATTERED
BY
RAIN...

FLINCHING
AT EVERY
FLASH OF
LIGHTNING...

WE
PUSHED ON,
NEVER
LETTING GO
OF EACH
OTHER'S
HANDS.

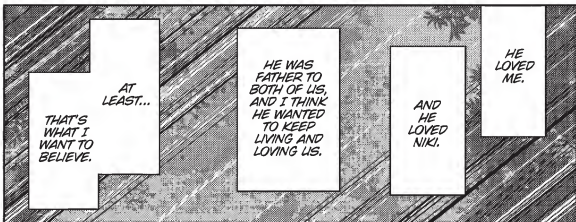




EQUALLY.

*...THAT
OUR DAD
LOVED US
BOTH.*

*I
THINK...*



*AT
LEAST...*

*THAT'S
WHAT I
WANT TO
BELIEVE.*

*HE WAS
FATHER TO
BOTH OF US,
AND I THINK
HE WANTED
TO KEEP
LIVING AND
LOVING US.*

*AND
HE
LOVED
NIKI.*

*HE
LOVED
ME.*



*I
UNDER-
STAND
WHY
HE DID.*



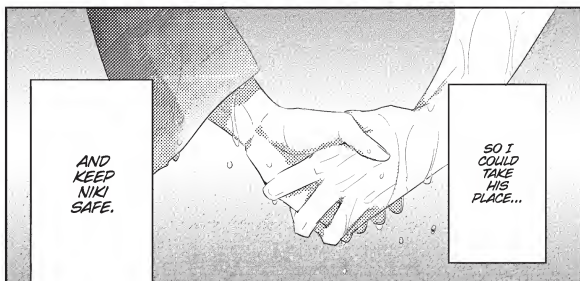
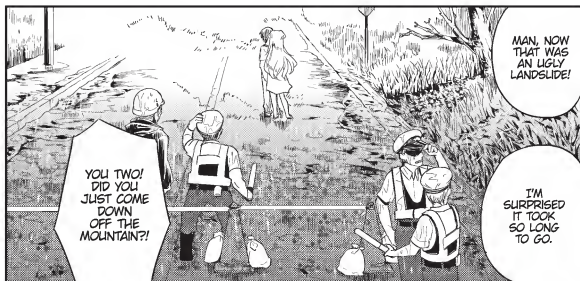
*NOW...
TODAY...*

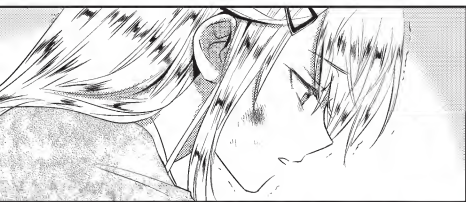
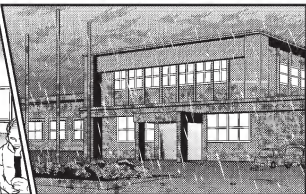
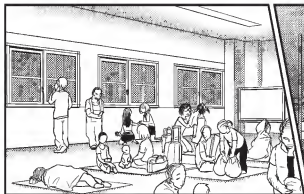


*BUT THINGS
HAPPENED
AND HE
WAS
FORCED TO
CHOOSE
ONE OVER
THE OTHER.*

*HE
CHOSE
ME.*



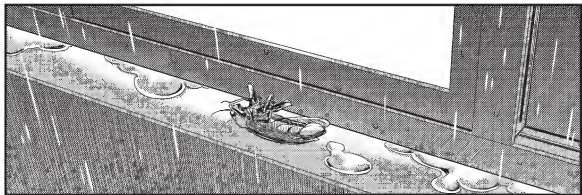




THANK YOU.

THANK YOU.





THANK YOU.



HOTAKA.

HOTAKA!

YEAH.
THE ROADS
FINALLY
STARTED
OPENING
UP
AGAIN.

ALL THE
PEOPLE WHO
EVACUATED
ARE GOING
BACK HOME,
NOW.

YOU
GOT
HERE.

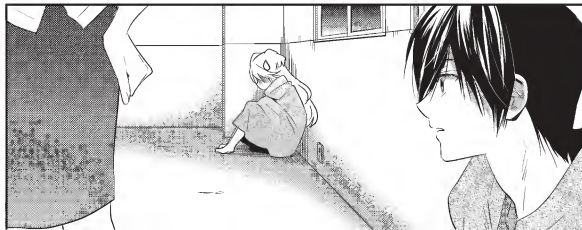
AH!

NIKI!

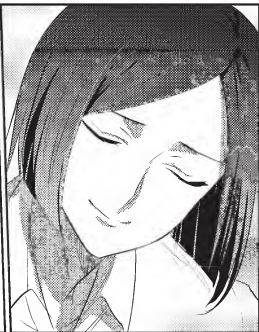
YOU LITTLE
DUNCE!
DO YOU
HAVE ANY
IDEA HOW
WORRIED
I WAS?!

HUH?

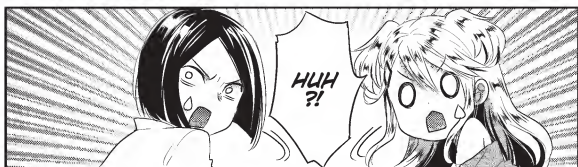
OH.
HEY,
MOM.













TOGETHER...





BUT
BETWEEN
US, THERE
WILL
BLOOM NO
FLOWERS.

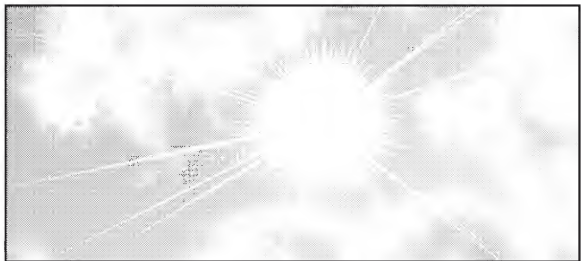
WE
WILL
BEAR
NO
FRUIT.

FOR
US,
ALL OF
TIME...

SHALL
BE,
EVER-
GREEN.

AND
THAT'S
FINE.

I WILL
BE HERE
ALWAYS.



TO YOU...

*I GIVE
ETERNITY.*





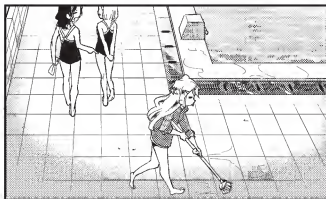






AT LEAST,
THAT IS WHAT
WE AGREED TO
LEAVE AS THE
PUBLIC STORY,
DECIDING TO
AVOID EACH
OTHER AT
SCHOOL AS
MUCH AS
POSSIBLE.





*I GIVE TO
YOU...
ETERNITY...*



THE END



THANK YOU FOR COMING ALONG ON THIS
FOUR-YEAR RIDE WITH EVERGREEN!

I HOPE AND PRAY THAT NIKI-CHAN, HOTAKA,
AND ALL THE OTHER CHARACTERS OF
THIS STORY WILL GO ON TO LEAD HAPPY,
FULFILLING LIVES.

EVERY TIME THE MANUSCRIPT FOR A NEW
CHAPTER WOULD GET TO ME FROM
TAKEMIYA-SENSEI, I WOULD SIT DOWN
AND TEAR THROUGH IT, AS IF I WAS JUST
ANOTHER ONE OF HER READERS.

BY BRINGING ALL OF HER CHARACTERS,
THEIR EMOTIONS, AND THEIR INDIVIDUAL
SCENES TO LIFE, I LEARNED AN
UNCOUNTABLE NUMBER OF LESSONS.
I'VE GAINED SO MUCH INVALUABLE
EXPERIENCE FROM THIS SERIES.
THANK YOU!!

TO TAKEMIYA-SENSEI, EVERYONE WHO
HELPED ME, AND ALL OF THE READERS
OUT THERE--THANK YOU VERY, VERY MUCH.

I HOPE TO SEE YOU ALL AGAIN SOMETIME,
SOMEWHERE!!

☆ **SPECIAL THANKS** ☆

YUYUKO TAKEMIYA-SENSEI
SUPERVISING EDITOR TAKAJIMA-SAMA
SEKI KEIKO-SAMA
THE EDITORS OF DENGEKI DAIOH



SHIN-SAMA, MOCKOSS-SAMA
FRIENDS + FAMILY
+ OUR WONDERFUL READERS!





evergreen
エーグリーノ

★ Good
Bye!



SEVEN SEAS ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

 evergreen
VOLUME 4

story by YUYUKO TAKEMIYA / art by AKIRA CASKABE

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EVERGREEN VOL. 4

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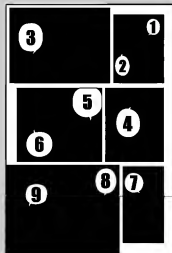
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READING DIRECTIONS

This book reads from **right to left**, Japanese style. If this is your first time reading manga, you start reading from the top right panel on each page and take it from there. If you get lost, just follow the numbered diagram here. It may seem backwards at first, but you'll get the hang of it! Have fun!!



TO YOU, I GIVE ETERNITY.

A brainy manga club captain and a beautiful swim club's ace seem like an improbable match. Yet despite their differences, Hotaka and Niki find that they have deep feelings for each other. Shortly after Niki's confession, the two excitedly set their first date. They agree to go to a summer festival together. But shocking revelations about Niki's true identity will drastically affect their relationship, in this heart-wrenching conclusion to the *Evergreen* series.



Rated: TEEN

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